

THE SOLO SONGS OF DARIUS MILHAUD:  
A HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
CURRICULUM OF THE COLLEGE VOICE STUDIO

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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Chairman: Forrest W. Parkay  
Cochairman: David Z. Kushner  
Major Department: Educational Leadership

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) was a composer of exceptional productivity and wide-ranging interests. Of the more than 400 opus numbers in his oeuvre, 64 are devoted to songs, comprising 265 individual songs. This vast and diverse body of vocal literature has lain largely neglected, however, receiving little attention in standard references, even though discussions of the composer's instrumental and stage works are common.

Reasons for the neglect vary. Milhaud's early reputation for flippancy has fueled a misunderstanding of his motives in choosing texts, and the perception that the songs as a whole are musically difficult and aesthetically inaccessible has discouraged performers and teachers from using them. In critical commentary, neglect most often stems from a mistrust of the sheer volume of Milhaud's output.

The purposes of this research were (1) to gather and present insights of performers and teachers into the songs of Darius Milhaud, (2) to serve as pedagogical support in the introduction of selected solo songs of Darius Milhaud in the college voice studio, (3) to determine what supplementary materials might aid in this endeavor, and (4) to contribute to current musicological research on Darius Milhaud, with emphasis on the solo songs.

The study included an investigation of the composer's cultural and aesthetic environment and of the attitudes and compositional techniques which produced the songs, as well as an analysis of selected songs. In addition, the study included a summary of responses to items on a questionnaire that was distributed to 150 voice teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists in selected colleges and universities across the United States. The purpose of this sample survey was to elicit information on current practices in college and university voice studios with regard to the solo songs of Darius Milhaud.

Analysis of selected songs suggests that, among Milhaud's 265 songs, there are some which are appropriate for use in the college voice studio. Responses to the questionnaires suggest that rejection of Milhaud's songs as teaching pieces often has more to do with unfamiliarity with the music and unavailability of scores than with an active

decision to reject the songs on aesthetic or pedagogical grounds.

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Since the rise of musicology in the nineteenth century, musicological research has been directed primarily toward the understanding of instrumental music and of large-scale vocal works, such as operas and oratorios. Music criticism, too, has focused on these two genres. There appears to be a dearth of serious research into the vast repertoire of small-scale, solo vocal works, and existing commentary is often condescending and superficial. Works for solo voice--even works of major composers--are often neglected, or discussed with less thoroughness than they merit.

The compositions of Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) are no exception. This extraordinarily prolific composer produced a catalogue of over 400 opus numbers containing diverse works in many genres, informed by wide-ranging interests. French literature, Greek tragedy, Jewish traditions, and folk music all find expression in the flood of Milhaud's compositions. In addition to the numerous instrumental works upon which his current reputation largely rests,

Milhaud wrote 265 songs, under 64 opus numbers (Collaer, 1982/1988, p. 165).

This large and diverse body of vocal literature, however, has been neglected by musicologists, performers, and teachers. Milhaud's works for solo voice receive scant attention in standard references, even though discussions of his instrumental and stage works are common.<sup>1</sup> The songs rarely appear on recitals,<sup>2</sup> and even contemporaneous reviews are limited. Recordings, always useful educational tools,

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<sup>1</sup>In his survey of French art song, David Cox mentions a handful of Milhaud's works for solo voice, briefly discussing some of the more interesting features of these few works. The tone of Cox's approach to Milhaud, however, is condescending, as indicated by the following quotation (Cox, 1960, p. 221):

Darius Milhaud is the most uneven of composers. Traditional patterns, polytonality, jazz, folklore, everything is mixed together and poured out with a dreadful fertility. Whatever its quality, however, it is always musical outpouring--even if the music means very little.

This introduction mitigates the effect of the very next sentence in Cox's essay: "Amongst the many songs we find some of the composer's best compositions." See David Cox, "France," in Dennis Stevens, ed., A History of Song (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1960), pp. 194-227, especially pp. 221-223. It should be noted that the Stevens History is one of the few standard surveys of song literature, and therefore is one of the first books consulted by singers and teachers.

<sup>2</sup>Concerts sponsored by the Darius Milhaud Society (incorporated in 1984) offer an exception to this general tendency. The Society promotes performances of all of Milhaud's works, including the songs, and attempts to keep records on all performances of his compositions world-wide.

are few and difficult to obtain.<sup>3</sup> Given this general lack of interest in Milhaud's vocal works, it is reasonable to assume that college studio voice teachers neglect this literature as well.

### Need for the Study

The Milhaud songs are potentially a significant source of teaching material for the college voice studio. The quality of the texts, the variety of subject matter represented by the texts, and the diversity of musical styles represented by the songs relate them to several forces and movements in twentieth-century musical culture and thus offer the studio teacher of voice an engaging approach to the presentation of twentieth-century art music. Teaching about twentieth-century music through these songs--from their historical, theoretical, and aesthetic aspects--could alleviate the all too familiar "contemporary music anxiety" felt by many music students and, indeed, many

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<sup>3</sup>For example, the Spring 1989 Schwann guide to recorded music lists only three of Milhaud's song cycles. The Darius Milhaud Society Newsletter for Spring 1989 includes information about an additional new release not listed in the Schwann guide. In the discography included in the 1987 edition of Milhaud's autobiography, Ma vie heureuse, compiler Francine Bloch shows only seven recordings of Milhaud's songs for the years 1930-57. Four of these have been re-released within the last 25 years. No recordings are listed for the years 1957-75. For the years 1975-84, six recordings are listed, two of which are among those titles recorded during the early years.

lovers of serious music. Milhaud's songs range from the simple, tuneful, and easily accessible to the extremely difficult. They are entirely French in conception and aesthetic, and so offer the teacher a potentially rich source of material which is traditionally considered more difficult for English-speaking singers.<sup>4</sup> Echoes of many predominant twentieth-century styles can be found in this repertoire. A study of these songs from a pedagogical point of view, therefore, would be useful to college teachers of voice.

#### Purposes of the Study

The four purposes of this study are united by a consideration of problems related to the teaching of Darius Milhaud's solo songs in the college voice studio. This study is intended

1. To gather and to present to the musical community in general various insights of performers and teachers into the songs of Darius Milhaud.
2. To serve as a source of pedagogical support and of information for the use of studio teachers by providing a performer/teacher's analysis of selected songs.

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<sup>4</sup>French language literature is usually the last of four major languages groups to be introduced to voice students, following English, Italian, and German. The difficulty of French vocal literature for English-speaking singers lies not so much in the pronunciation of the language as in the conceptualization of French thought as expressed in its linguistic structure. This is alluded to in Chapter III, and it is discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

3. To determine what supplementary materials voice teachers, coaches, and accompanists would find helpful in teaching Milhaud's solo songs.
4. To contribute to current musicological research on Darius Milhaud, with particular emphasis on his solo songs.

### Research Questions

Several research questions have been posed for the purposes stated above. Questions related to the first purpose are the following:

1. With which of the solo songs of Milhaud are teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists familiar?
2. Which of the solo songs of Milhaud are most often performed or assigned by teachers, coaches, and accompanists?
3. What insights into the technical and aesthetic problems of Milhaud's songs do teachers, coaches and accompanists offer?

Questions related to the second purpose are

1. Which of Milhaud's songs, if any, might be introduced to college voice students?
2. What are the musical characteristics of the songs selected for analysis?
3. What potential pedagogical problems are evident in the songs selected for analysis?

The research question related to the third purpose of the study is as follows: What materials do teachers, coaches, and accompanists suggest as being potentially helpful in the study of Milhaud's solo songs?



The questions related to the fourth purpose of the study are

1. What social and artistic influences led to Milhaud's personal compositional style?
2. What insights does critical commentary offer on the solo songs of Darius Milhaud?

### Methodology

Standard musicological research procedures were used, including the consultation of secondary sources (in this case, chiefly biographical and critical in nature), the examination of primary sources (Milhaud's articles, autobiography, and other writings), and the analysis of the musical scores and the texts.

It was necessary to supplement this musicological research with a sample survey of educational procedures in established voice studios. For this purpose a questionnaire addressed to studio teachers, coaches, and accompanists was used. Some of these studio teachers, coaches, and accompanists were selected on the basis of their membership in the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Others were selected from the College Music Society's list of accredited schools and departments of music.

Another aspect of the inquiry involved the analysis of the music itself. Of particular interest was the stylistic analysis of a selection of Milhaud's songs. This group of

songs was selected from a larger group of 87 songs (18 opus numbers) chosen for examination, which represented texts by a variety of poets and which ranged in dates of composition or publication from 1912 to 1949. The final selection was large enough to be representative but small enough to allow the possibility of meaningful analytical research.

### Analysis of Data

Data from the questionnaire were analyzed to determine current practice regarding the songs of Milhaud and to identify the respondents' opinions of the songs as literature and their concerns about the songs as instructional material.

Data from the analysis of the songs and related musicological research were organized as appropriate for each song, including some or all of the following:

1. Preliminary overview of the song.
2. Historical origin and background of the song.
3. Form of the song.
4. The text of the song (including prosody).
5. Musical features of the accompaniment.
6. Pedagogical problems inherent in the song. These include
  - a. Problems of hearing (i.e., problems in developing the performer's internal pitch sense);

- b. Problems of interpretation (text or music, or both);
- c. Problems of vocal production; and
- d. Problems of ensemble (the performing relationship between singer and accompanist).

### Limitations

Darius Milhaud wrote very little about his own works, and relatively little has been written by others about the songs. As indicated above (pp. 1-2), the Milhaud oeuvre has received scant serious attention from music critics, musicologists, and music theorists. Consequently, the quality and quantity of the appropriate scholarly sources in this area was limited. Conclusions about the study represent the professional judgment of the researcher.

Similarly, the questionnaires, which provided a portion of the data for this study, revealed a similar lack of attention to the Milhaud songs on the part of performers and teachers. This, however, did not prevent the development in this study of valid and useful pedagogical insights, although it must be acknowledged that it was not possible to validate completely those pedagogical insights.

Although every effort was made to gather opinions from a wide variety of sources, it must be remembered that the very nature of the inquiry restricted the study to a relatively small number of people: respondents were

professional musicians, active in the field of vocal performance and pedagogy. Thus respondents were not representative of the general population of musicians (or even of the general population of university music instructors).

One other limitation with respect to the questionnaire need hardly be mentioned: the success of the questionnaire depended upon the degree of cooperation offered by college voice teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists.

The vocal literature which is the subject of this study was limited to a group of eight songs selected on the basis of certain pedagogical considerations from the 265 written by the composer. These songs represent a variety of poets and range in date of composition of publication from 1920 to 1937.

This study was also limited in that it did not attempt any thorough discussion of the techniques involved in vocal production, except as these may apply directly to some aspect of the repertoire under discussion. This study adopted, rather, a holistic approach. Songs were introduced in the context of related cultural, literary, analytical, and musical ideas.

A final limitation which must be mentioned was the assumptions of the researcher. This study involved a significant amount of research in the fields of musicology

and music analysis. The researcher's interests were inevitably reflected in the choice of data from musicological secondary sources, the selections of the songs to analyze, the emphasis given to various aspects of the songs in the process of analysis,<sup>5</sup> and the construction and interpretation of the questionnaire.

### Assumptions

The primary assumptions of this study are listed below:

1. Because Darius Milhaud is a respected twentieth-century composer, many of whose instrumental works are accorded serious critical study, it seemed reasonable to assume that his songs would exhibit a high level of compositional sophistication despite the apparent lack of critical interest in them.
2. Items on the questionnaire were framed in such a manner that responses to them would reveal the nature of current practice in vocal studios.
3. The purpose of analysis is not simply to say something true about the music. Rather, it is to elucidate specific problems from a specific point of view. In this study, the problems were pedagogical, and specifically studio-related.

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<sup>5</sup>For example, one analyst may be interested primarily in problems of form, while another analyst, equally competent, may be concerned primarily with the harmonic language of the songs.

Thus the analysis focused on problems related to performing Milhaud's songs and teaching students to perform these songs.

4. In the analysis of individual songs, the researcher must investigate the music of the songs unencumbered by any systematic bias: What was needed in the present study was not a "form analysis" or a "Schenkerian analysis" or a "set analysis," but a general musical analysis which responded to each song on an individual basis.

5. In the analysis of the songs, the text was viewed as of supreme importance, and every effort was made to correlate the poetic meaning with the purely musical events which enfold and enhance it.

6. Performance should take place within a specific cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic context. Therefore, pedagogy should encourage the student to seek to understand the cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic basis for the compositional choices made in the creation of the song. In vocal performance the understanding of the text is closely tied to these factors.

### Definitions

Listed below, in alphabetical order, are several terms of crucial importance to the study. A brief definition is given for each.

The accompaniment in a song consists of the instrumental part or parts, as distinct from the vocal solo part. In the present study only songs for solo voice and piano were considered, so the term accompaniment always refers to the piano part.

An accompanist is any musician who plays the accompaniment (q.v.). In the present study, accompanist always means "the pianist who accompanies the singer." The term accompanist has historically implied that one part (the voice part) was predominant and the other part (the piano accompaniment) was subordinate. In much music, this implication is accurate and acceptable. However, in the music of Milhaud, the piano part and the voice part are often of equal importance.

Applied music is college-level private instruction in musical performance.

The analysis of music (music analysis) is defined in a standard reference work as "the study of musical structure applied to actual works. . ." (Randel, 1986, p. 37). For the purposes of the present study, "analysis" is further understood to concern to some extent questions of compositional technique. These questions generally include consideration of such "structural aspects of a work" as the "identification of its larger outlines or form, variability

within types of form, specific gestures, special devices, and relationship to a text" (Randel, 1986, p. 37).

The analyses used in the present study are undertaken from the point of view of the college voice teacher. These analyses seek to offer descriptive musical insights which are of use to singers, accompanists, coaches, and vocal pedagogues. At times the descriptions may involve data on compositional technique; at times they may involve gestural characterizations. The aim in presenting them is always pedagogical rather than theoretical.

An art song is defined in a standard musical reference source as

a song intended for the concert repertory, as distinct from a folk or popular song. An art song traditionally is a setting of a text of high literary quality and, unlike most folk and popular songs, includes an accompaniment that is specified by the composer rather than improvised or arranged by or for the performer. (Randel, 1986, p. 56)

Contemporary music in this study refers to music written in the twentieth century; therefore, a contemporary art song is one written within the last eighty-nine years. Some writers refer to "modern music," or simply "twentieth-century music." For the purposes of this study, these terms are synonymous with contemporary music.

Ensemble is generally used in one of two senses. Most commonly, it simply refers to a specific combination of musicians, playing music written for that combination. For



example, a string quartet, a marching band, and a soprano accompanied by a pianist are all ensembles.

A more sophisticated usage of ensemble--the usage preferred in the present study--refers not just to the presence of some combination of musicians, but to the quality of the musical relationship between the musicians. If the musicians are listening to each other, if they are sensitive to each other's nuances, if they contribute to a musical performance in which their individual efforts are made to serve the aesthetic good of the whole, then those musicians are said to have good ensemble. However skilled the individual musicians, a mélange of soloistic playing is always less satisfying than a performance with good ensemble.

Language, in this study, is a term which applies to musical as well as verbal phenomena. The terms "harmonic language," "melodic language," and "rhythmic language," then, refer to a composer's customary compositional processes with regard to his use of the musical elements of harmony, melody, and rhythm. Because the present study is addressed to song literature, the term language in both its musical and verbal senses is encountered frequently.

A mélodie is "a solo song with accompaniment, usually the French art song of the 19th and 20th centuries, and thus

the French counterpart of the German lied" (Randel, 1986, p. 480).

Musicological research most commonly refers to research into problems of music history (music-historical research), but it can also refer to music-analytical research. It is important to note the differences between research in this sense and research in the standard sense of "empirical research." Musicological research, while it strives to be as objective and logical as possible, is necessarily conditioned to some extent by the researcher's musicality.

Part can mean different (and contradictory) things in musical writings; therefore, in the interest of clarity, the present study restricts the definition of the term: Part refers to one member of an ensemble, or to the music assigned to that member. That is, in the literature under consideration here, there are two parts: the voice part (the solo) and the piano part (the accompaniment).

Piece is a synonym for song, composition, or musical work.

In historical research, primary sources are those sources closest to the historical fact; they give the words of the witnesses or first recorders of the event (Haydon, 1941, p. 296 and Barzun and Graff, 1985, p. 124). For the purpose of this study, the primary sources includes Milhaud's prose writings, interviews, and his songs.

Prosody is often used "to refer to all features of a language involving stress, pitch, and length of syllables" (Randel, 1986, p. 661). The present study, however, will use prosody in a more restricted sense, to mean the musical setting of a (usually poetic) text. Certainly the text itself will have purely linguistic musical elements (such as the "stress, pitch, and length of syllables" cited above); the art of the song composer is to coordinate those elements--and the denotative and connotative meanings of the text as well--with the music to which the text is set. Thus, prosody is understood here to refer to the relationship between linguistic and purely musical elements.

Repertoire is commonly used in two senses. In the first sense, it refers to the list of compositions which a performer has at some time performed, or is prepared to perform. A singer's repertoire is necessarily a very small portion of the vocal literature with which he or she is familiar. In a more general sense, repertoire can denote all the pieces that are available for any given performer to perform, even though no single performer could possibly perform them all. For example, one may speak of the "repertoire for soprano with piano accompaniment."

A romantic art song is one written during the portion of the nineteenth century which is called the "romantic era," roughly 1810 to 1900. A song written in the twentieth

century which has some characteristics of the romantic art song may be said to be "neo-romantic."

In historical research, secondary sources are those containing information based on some prior evidence (Haydon, 1941, p. 296 and Barzun and Graff, 1985, p.124). For the purposes of this study, secondary sources are all sources not defined as primary sources (q.v.). Textbooks, essays, and critical writings about Milhaud are examples of secondary sources.

Texture is defined by a standard musical reference work (Randel, 1986, p. 843) as

[the] general pattern of sound created by the elements of a work or passage. For example, the texture of a work that is perceived as consisting of the combination of several melodic lines is said to be contrapuntal or polyphonic. A work consisting primarily of a succession of chords . . . is said to have a chordal or homophonic texture. Between these two extremes, there are numerous gradations for which there is no very precise terminology.

Occasionally it is advantageous to speak of texture as "thick" or "thin," that is, textures with many notes sounding simultaneously, or textures with few notes sounding simultaneously.

Vocal coach and voice teacher are sometimes used as synonyms, but there is in fact a distinction. The vocal coach is a teacher whose primary function is to guide the student performer in his or her interpretation of a song;

the voice teacher's primary function is to work on general vocal development and technique. Naturally, the functions of teacher and coach often overlap: the coach may make suggestions on matters of technique and the teacher may make suggestions on matters of interpretation.

Voice may refer to the singer's voice or to melodic elements in the piano accompaniment. A single piano part (q.v.) may have more than one voice.

Voice studio is commonly used in two senses. On the simplest level, it is the location where the voice teacher works, where he or she holds lessons and prepares his or her own performances. In this sense, a voice studio is equivalent to a painter's studio; it is a location for serious artistic enterprise. In a wider sense, all the students who study with a particular teacher are collectively referred to as belonging to his or her studio.

### Organization of the Study

This study is presented in six chapters. In Chapter I, "Introduction," the fundamental premises of the study are discussed, and the definitions of several terms of central importance are presented. In Chapter II, "Review of the Literature," the primary and secondary sources appropriate to the study are examined. Such sources include the available standard musicological references on Milhaud, his

songs, and his compositional process in general. Writings by Milhaud himself, as well as writings by others about Milhaud are examined. There is also some discussion of secondary sources on musical analysis.

Chapter III, "Materials and Methods," contains a discussion of the research procedures employed. The use of the questionnaires and the analytical procedures (both musical and non-musical) are explained in this chapter. Chapter IV, "Results of a Survey of Studio Voice Teachers, Coaches, and Accompanists," contains an analysis of the results of the survey (in the form of a questionnaire) completed by studio teachers, accompanists, and coaches regarding their pedagogical use of twentieth-century vocal literature in general and the solo songs of Darius Milhaud in particular.

In Chapter V, "Description and Analysis of Selected Songs," the cultural and historical background of the French art song is discussed and an analytical approach to the songs of Milhaud is formulated. A selection of Milhaud's songs is analyzed with a view toward their use in pedagogical situations.

In Chapter VI, "Summary, Discussion and Conclusions, and Recommendations," the findings developed through the analysis of the questionnaire and the findings developed through the musical analysis of selected songs are

summarized and discussed, and recommendations in the areas of vocal pedagogy and musicological research are presented.

## CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Problem of Style in Contemporary Music

The researcher approaches the question of musical style in the twentieth-century with trepidation. Before the twentieth century, through long stretches of musical history, composers shared basic premises about the nature of composition. Familiar chordal structures were used in familiar ways, regardless of the composer's individual genius and regardless of the great variety of individual musical styles. The theory of counterpoint and harmony and the use of more or less standard musical forms and genres (the sonata, the overture, the symphony, and the like), helped to provide the practicing composer with a musical lingua franca. The pre-twentieth-century composer was introduced to the musical language through a disciplined apprenticeship: He learned the language and then spent his career perfecting his skills in the technique of its use. When musical researchers write about "functional tonality" or "conventional harmonic procedures" or "the common practice" period, they are referring to this set of basic



assumptions. There were, of course, important changes of style (such as the change in the course of the eighteenth century from the "Baroque" style, represented by Johann Sebastian Bach, to the "Classical" style, represented by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart). There were even changes of tonal language (as, in the course of the seventeenth century, the major and minor scales replaced the church modes and the Renaissance gave way to the early Baroque). It is important to realize, however, that the compositional process itself survived these changes. One of the tasks of music history is to elucidate style in musical literature. This task is facilitated when composers share such basic assumptions as these.

One of the primary problems in the study of twentieth-century musical literature is that such shared basic assumptions no longer exist. The problem of musical style in twentieth-century musical culture is unlike the problem of style in any earlier period of which musicology has sufficient knowledge to attempt the problem. Some composers--and sometimes single pieces--speak in a unique language, a language unlike any other. This presents vast problems to the composer (and may account in part for the relatively small output of many twentieth-century composers). It also presents problems to the researcher,

who must search for new principles of construction in order to address the issue of style.

The problem is stated well in a popular survey of twentieth-century music:

The creative history of Western music since 1900 is inconceivable without the evolution of Western culture in the preceding centuries; our musical institutions and, indeed, our whole way of thinking about music are inheritances from the recent and not-so-recent past, and in certain fundamental ways the tradition has continued to exert its influence even on the greatest innovators. Nevertheless, a distinctly twentieth-century viewpoint emerges from the fact that nearly all the creative musical thinking of our century--even that which is described as "conservative"--has participated in the search for new expressive structures. The old forms, the old expressive structures, can be implied by the term "functional tonality" understood in its broadest traditional sense, embracing ideas and "expression" on the one hand and underlying structural, organizing principles on the other. After 1900 the old propositions ceased to function as a priori assumptions; related to the tradition or not, tonal or non-tonal, conservative or revolutionary, all twentieth-century musical art has to establish its own expressive and intellectual premises. (Salzman, 1988, p. 1-2)

In the present section, research literature appropriate to this particular problem--the definition of musical style in the twentieth century--will be reviewed in light of its application to the song composition of Darius Milhaud. Literature pertinent to two broad areas of inquiry will be reviewed. Those areas are (a) Milhaud biography and (b) music criticism and analysis. The research in literature

dealing with biographical detail will be guided by consideration of

1. the influence of family life on the composer's development;
2. the dominant influences on Milhaud's attitudes, aesthetic thought, and approaches to composition;
3. the importance of his French nationality to his compositional style;
4. the artistic and social implications of his Jewish background;
5. factors which affected his attitude toward song-writing;
6. the nature of his training in composition; and
7. other aspects of his musical background.

The research in literature dealing with music criticism and analysis will be guided by consideration of

1. the general stylistic context of musical composition in the twentieth century;
2. the salient features of Milhaud's style;
3. Milhaud's compositional procedure;
4. critical evaluation of Milhaud's works;
5. analytical procedures which promise to be most useful in the context of the pedagogical needs of the vocal studio; and
6. analysis of the songs.

Discussion of the literature will be organized by the following topics, all of which draw their substance from the two areas described above:

1. Early Influences.
2. Life as an Artist: Formative Influences.
3. Jewish and French Heritage.
4. Aesthetics and Philosophy.
5. View of Composition as Life's Work.
6. Common Descriptions of Milhaud and of His Music.
7. The Songs.
8. Musical Analysis.

The literature review in this chapter comprises several categories of writings which address these topics:

1. General historical surveys of twentieth century music.
2. Surveys of song literature which include material relevant to Milhaud.
3. Surveys of Jews in music.
4. Critical, polemical, and technical writings by Milhaud's contemporaries.
5. Writings by Milhaud himself.
6. Recent critical writings relevant to Milhaud's songs.
7. Scholarly literature in musicology or music theory of potential relevance to the understanding of Milhaud's songs.

Though the emphasis of this research is on the songs of Darius Milhaud, it is the researcher's belief that they cannot be understood except in the larger context of the composer's life and works, and in view of musical trends in the twentieth century. These works should not be taken in

isolation, rather in the context of the culture of our era. Milhaud himself was always outspoken about the necessity of increasing one's musical culture, of developing sensibilities along with technique.

### Early Influences

Darius Milhaud's family was wealthy and prominent in Aix-en-Provence, and he flourished under the advantages that a cultured home can bring. He began his musical studies at age seven, although he had shown ability at age four, when his mother found him playing, though hesitantly, "Funiculi, funicula" on the family's piano. Doctors advised against musical studies for medical reasons, however (he was always a "nervous" child), so formal studies did not begin until age seven. In the intervening years, music was, nevertheless, a constant companion. His mother was a contralto who had studied in Paris up until the time of his birth, and his father was "a pillar of the Musical Society of Aix, and accompanied all its vocalists" (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 14). Upon discovering the child's gift for music, the elder Milhaud played duets with him, which awakened, perhaps prophetically, the child's sense of rhythm.

Milhaud's first teacher was Leo Bruguier, violinist of Aix, whose teaching techniques could serve as a model for

all teachers, Milhaud writes in retrospect. Milhaud began his studies in 1899, and from 1905, Bruguier had him participate in a string quartet made up of Bruguier himself, Milhaud, a local carpenter violist named Ségalas and Monsieur Pourcel, cellist and instructor at the Conservatory in Aix.

Other early teachers included Alfred Brun, who taught elementary classes at the Paris Conservatory (a lesson from time to time, to spur the young student on); Firmin Touche, violin, during the summer of 1905; and Lieutenant Hambourg, conductor of the band of the 61st Regiment,<sup>6</sup> to whom Milhaud went for harmony lessons, on Bruguier's advice. Milhaud makes no mention of early piano teachers, although he seems always to have played.

The young student showed an early interest in composition, setting texts by Heine and "turning out with great facility rather clumsy works" as early as 1905 or 1906 (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 19). He also showed an early antipathy to harmony, which he had difficulty applying to

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<sup>6</sup>In his autobiography, Milhaud gives no first names for the violist Ségalas, the cellist whom he calls only Monsieur Pourcel, or for the conductor of the band of the 61st Regiment, Lieutenant Hambourg, who was an early harmony teacher of Milhaud's. Drake (in Milhaud, 1982) refers to Lieutenant Hambourg as simply "un professeur aixois" (p. 18) (a professor from Aix). He is identifiable because of the text he used, Reber and Dubois's harmony treatise. No other sources consulted name these early fellow musicians at all.

his compositions as he was learning it under Lieutenant Hambourg's impatient tutelage.

I could not always understand Reber and Dubois's excellent treatise on harmony. . . . I finished the chords as best I could and attempted a few exercises in writing on a bass or developing set themes, but these bored me more than anything I had ever had to do before. (pp. 18-19)

This, too, was a hint of things to come.

Despite the unconventionality of the harmonies that he preferred and the irrelevance, for him, of the more traditional harmonic structures he was making such an effort to learn, his cousin encouraged him to show his compositions to the conductor of the Opera<sup>7</sup>, who recognized the young composer's talent and encouraged him to "begin by learning [his] trade." He offered to follow Milhaud's efforts with interest, which he did, to Milhaud's great advantage, as will be seen shortly.

At eighteen, Milhaud went to the Paris conservatory, where he continued his violin studies with Henri Berthelier. He studied composition with Charles Widor and harmony with Xavier Leroux, the latter a particularly unhappy arrangement for both student and teacher. Milhaud found Leroux's exercises "deadly dull" and even "anti-musical." Leroux, in a combination of exasperation and recognition of Milhaud's

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<sup>7</sup>Again, no first name is given. Milhaud refers to the conductor simply as Rabaud. See pp. 19 and 32.

gifts, finally dismissed his difficult student. Milhaud reports the ending of that fateful interview: "What are you doing here? You are trying to learn a conventional musical language when you already have one of your own. Leave the class! Resign!" (Milhaud, 1949/1952. p. 32).

The conductor Rabaud, who had earlier expressed an interest in Milhaud's work, advised Milhaud to apply for admission to André Gédalge's counterpoint class. Seeing a young composer who was more interested in learning his craft than in winning prizes, Gédalge admitted him to the counterpoint class. The association with Gédalge in that counterpoint class and, later, in composition and orchestration classes made a lasting impression. At age 73, Milhaud wrote in the foreword to an English edition of Gédalge's Treatise on the Fugue,

I was lucky enough to study with André Gédalge for several years. I have the impression that everything I know, so far as teaching is concerned, I owe to him. . . . [F]or the study of the technique of the fugue in all possible details, André Gédalge left us a real monument.  
(p. vii)

It is usually noted that at the Conservatory, Milhaud won second prize in violin in 1911, second prize in counterpoint in 1914, and the Prix Lepaulle in 1915 for his Sonata for Two Violins and Piano. Milhaud is modest about this. In fact, he dropped violin studies after winning no prize in 1912, when he found that he wanted to devote his



time to composition. As for the Prix Lepaulle, Milhaud calls it the only award he ever won, and hints modestly that he won that only because all his friends from the Conservatory were on active military duty, while he had been rejected on medical grounds (Milhaud, 1949/1953, pp. 62-63).

### Life as an Artist: Formative Influences

Milhaud lived the life of the complete artist, constantly surrounded at home and in Paris by ideas, art, and music. His friends comprised a veritable "Who's Who" among French philosophers, writers, artists, and musicians in the early twentieth century. Among those friends and fellow musicians were the famous "Six."<sup>8</sup> Much has been written, often erroneously, about Milhaud's association with Les Six. Contemporaneous accounts tend to overstate the case for the group's homogeneity and intent.<sup>9</sup> Almost from the beginning, however, Milhaud tried to set the record straight. In a 1923 article entitled "The Evolution of Modern Music in Paris and Vienna," Milhaud cautions that

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<sup>8</sup>In addition to Milhaud, members of Les Six were Germaine Tailleferre, Francis Poulenc, Georges Auric, Arthur Honegger, and Louis Durey.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Émile Vuillermoz's vitriolic "warning" to the American public in 1924, entitled "The Legend of the Six." Vuillermoz describes members of Les Six as a school which "proclaimed loud blasphemies against the masters of the preceding generation" (p. 18).

"one must not think, as many do, that according to the name, we are alike in aesthetics; our activity and our friendship united us. But time has shown (how speedily!) the absolute divergence of our tendencies. And so much the better!" (p. 550).

The idea persisted, however, and in 1951 Jean Cocteau, who was closely associated with the group, wrote a note on the subject.

Le groupe des six n'a été qu'un groupe de six amis dont le seul plaisir était de se rejoindre et de travailler ensemble. Il n'a jamais été une école mais un mouvement. C'est pourquoi je suis fier d'avoir toujours été son porte parole. (Harding, 1972, illustration facing p. 122)

("The group of six was nothing but a group of friends, whose only pleasure was to meet and work together. It was never a school, but a movement. That is why I am proud always to have been its spokesman.")<sup>10</sup>

Though the group shared, for awhile, an enthusiasm for the resurgence of what they considered truly French musical aesthetic, they were simply too individualistic to produce the unified outpouring often attributed to them. With the exception of a single piece which five of the six composers set out to write together (everyone except Durey), whatever works the members of the group produced, they produced as individuals.

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<sup>10</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the French are the present author's.

Milhaud was always particularly drawn to literary works, a function, perhaps, of his nationality;<sup>11</sup> quite early, he identified Paul Claudel, Francis Jammes, and André Gide as his favorite authors. His contemporaries Léo Latil and Armand Lunel, both poets, were his closest friends. In contrast to his relationship with members of Les Six, his association with these writers really was formative. This sensitivity to literature was the impetus for many of his youthful compositions, the first of which was a song. "Not having enough experience yet to elaborate purely musical work," Milhaud admits, "I sought inspiration in literary ideas" (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 29). Later, even after Gédalge advised him just to "write eight bars that can be sung without accompaniment" (p. 66), Milhaud retained his fascination with texts. Many writers consider that his best works are his operas and other stage works; appreciably fewer consider that his songs are among his most significant works.

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<sup>11</sup>Rollo Myers (1971) writes that this interest in literature is a characteristic of French composers:

A feature of French music at its highest level has always been its predominantly intellectual character, and French composers have tended to be generally more interested in literature and the other arts and, above all, to be more articulate than those of other nations and more in touch with current cultural trends. (p. 51).

Travelling was a passion with Milhaud, and he did so whenever possible. He does not say so in his writings, but the reader can assume financial independence, which allowed his passion for travel to be gratified, along with his artistic life style. Visits to exotic places fueled his composition; without the war-time travels to Brazil with Claudel, La Création du Monde would likely never have been.

Perhaps even more important to the development of Milhaud's creative powers than all of the above were the natural tendencies which manifested themselves at an early age. Milhaud seems always to have been aware of sounds. Some of the most vivid recollections of his youth are of the sounds around him at home and at his grandparents' home, a place of particularly fond memories for him. He composed from an early age (many of which pieces he later destroyed), and sought, even if subconsciously, to develop his own style. In his autobiography he writes of the development of his own musical language:

At night before I fell asleep I would shut my eyes and imagine I heard music so amazingly untrammelled I could never have described it. How shall I put it? To me it was a tremendous mystery in which my soul delighted, as in a refuge wherein, deep down in the recess of my subconscious mind, my musical language was slowly taking form. (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 23)

To his friend and biographer Paul Collaer, Milhaud tried to explain his turning to polytonality, which seemed

to the composer quite a natural avenue of expression. There is a mystical quality to his perception:

It is difficult to explain. I don't know if you can understand. But when I am in the country at night, plunged in silence, and I look at the sky, it seems to me that from every point in the firmament and even from the center of the earth, rays and impulses come toward me; each of these impulses carries a different thread of music, and all the infinity of musical lines cross and intersect each other without ever losing their individual clarity and distinctness. It is an incredible feeling. I have always tried to express this emotion, this sensation of a thousand simultaneous lines of music launched toward me. (Collaer, 1982/1988, p.37)<sup>12</sup>

### Jewish and French Heritage

The matter of the "inspiration" of Jewish composers, especially those who happen to write on traditional Jewish themes, is usually one of great critical interest. (It is perhaps of more interest or importance to critics and other commentators than to the composers themselves.) Like other highly visible groups--writers from the American South, Black composers, Spanish composers--Jewish composers are

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<sup>12</sup>Even writers who are sympathetic to Milhaud tend to see this explanation as disingenuous. (See, for example, Christopher Palmer's article on Milhaud in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th edition.) The same writers are willing to accept as an explanation of Milhaud's lyricism his roots in an exotic Mediterranean/Jewish culture, however. There is no reason to doubt either the composer's sincerity on this point or Collaer's reporting of it. This sense of wonder, of "tremendous mystery," is perfectly in keeping with the composer's character, as revealed in his autobiography and other writings.

assumed to exhibit certain characteristics or to show evidence of certain influences simply by virtue of their group affiliation. However, unlike the works of southern writers and Black or Spanish composers, which are usually described as exhibiting strong regional or nationalistic influences, the works of Jewish composers are often ascribed their characteristics on the basis of the religion of their authors.

Darius Milhaud's compositions have not been spared from this assumption. It is common to find in standard references allusions to the strong Jewish influence observable in his works, and works devoted to the contributions of Jewish composers (Arthur Holde's Jews in Music, for example) tend to see even stronger bonds between the composer's religion and his works.

The evidence in his own prose, however, is that, in his heart, Milhaud was a Frenchman first. While his familiarity with Jewish traditions may very well have inclined him toward certain texts, it does not seem to be the primary influence on his style, if his own writings can be credited--and there is no reason to doubt them. (It is nonetheless interesting that songs on Jewish texts have been among his best received works.)

His background as a Jew from that special region of Provence where, historically, Catholics and Jews lived

together under equal protection of the popes is obviously dear to him, but it is his French nationality which he stresses first. In the first sentence of his autobiography, the elements of nationality and religion come together: "I am a Frenchman from Provence, and by religion a Jew" (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 3). But here, as elsewhere, he is French first. In describing his own work, Milhaud writes throughout his life that he is French, that he is Provençal, that he is from the Mediterranean region.

His writing on this subject is not always unambiguous, however, and this may have contributed to some of the misapprehensions. For example, in his article entitled "The Evolution of Modern Music in Paris and in Vienna," Milhaud writes that, whatever the influences are that come together in the creative outpouring of an artist, the most powerful is that of his race. (It should be remembered that the term "race" is used in quite a loose sense in early writings in this century, and often is used to refer to Jews or even to individual nationalities.) ". . .[E]ach country, each race, possesses a rich past that weighs on the mind of an artist, and the deep and opposite tendencies of the different races may be found in every musician" (Milhaud, 1923a, p. 545).

That it is nationality, and not religion, to which Milhaud refers here is made plain in an undated and

unpublished essay entitled "The Problem of Jewish Music," among the holdings of the Mills College Milhaud Archive.<sup>13</sup>

I have studied very deeply the liturgy of the Provençal Jews and used it in some works of Jewish or religious character. But all of the characteristics of my music are French and mediterranean, or even more accurately, Latin. South America . . . had a strong influence, too, on my work, but it is a Latin influence because my Southern French soul feels at ease in any Latin atmosphere. (p. 11)

He goes on to say, later in the same essay, that he wrote several works of Jewish inspiration. But he adds, "In works of a religious character, if I use actual Jewish tunes I know a Jewish feeling is added to the music of a Franco-Latin heart, French citizen of Jewish faith" (p. 12).

While he is about it, he sets the record straight, as he sees it, with regard to other Jewish composers. In Paul Dukas, he hears only Gallic tradition; in Arnold Schoenberg, Austrian; in Aaron Copland, American; in Vittorio Rieti, Italian. Ernest Bloch, he says, belongs to the world.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>An anonymous note clipped to the typescript identifies the essay as one delivered at Columbia University somewhere around 1945, before the composition of the Service sacré. (Otherwise, that work would surely have been mentioned in the essay as being among those written on Jewish themes.)

<sup>14</sup>Bloch himself might have disagreed with Milhaud. Olin Downes quotes Bloch on this subject in an article from 1917 entitled, "Ernest Bloch, the Swiss Composer, on the Influence of Race in Composition":

I . . . am a Jew, and I aspire to write Jewish music, not for the sake of self-advertisement, but because I am sure that this is the only way in which I can



On the other hand, there are non-Jewish composers who write with great feeling for Jewish texts, he writes, and gives as an example Stravinsky, whose Symphony of Psalms is a strong expression of Old Testament literature.

Of his friend and fellow member of Les Six Arthur Honegger, he writes, "Honegger is a Protestant of Swiss origin, but in his oratorios King David and Judith you can find a sort of oriental flavor which no doubt would be attributed to Jewishness--if he was a Jew" (p. 11 bis).

There is another aspect to the effects of Milhaud's religion, and that aspect is a political one. Here the consequences of being Jewish are undeniable. Marion Bauer writes in a 1942 issue of The Musical Quarterly, that Milhaud's works were banned in Europe in 1940 (a ban that lasted until the end of the Second World War), along with the works of other Jewish composers, some of them long dead.<sup>15</sup> In 1940, the composer and his family were forced to flee Europe and seek safety in the United States.

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produce music of vitality and significance--if I can do such a thing at all. (p. 11)

<sup>15</sup>Enterprising non-Jewish recitalists in Paris nevertheless anagrammatically programmed his "Scaramouche" for two pianos as "Mous-Arachec" by Hamid-al-Usurid (Auric, 1945, and Slonimsky, 1971) and evaded unwary censors.

Aesthetics and Philosophy

A mature Milhaud, approaching his fiftieth birthday, wrote that he had no philosophy. In an essay entitled "La composition musicale," he writes a surprising and perhaps overly dramatic statement simply to make his point that a young musician should not confine himself in a "system":

Je n'ai pas d'esthétique, de philosophie, de théorie. J'aime écrire de la musique. Je le fais toujours avec amour sinon je ne le fais pas. Et je me suis toujours appliqué à accepter tout travail de quelque genre qu'il fût. Bien sûr, il y a des genres d'oeuvres que je préfère traiter, mais un compositeur doit TOUT FAIRE avec application, avec toutes les possibilités de la technique contemporaine dont il dispose, pour qu'après une vie de labeur, il puisse espérer voir demeurer des oeuvres dont la ligne mélodique pourra rester dans les mémoires, puisque la mélodie, seul élément vivant, permet seule à une oeuvre de durer.<sup>16</sup> (Milhaud, 1982, p. 159)

Milhaud's "non-aesthetic" position, then, is simply that he loves to write music. Disclaimers notwithstanding, there is a kind of creed, or at least attitude, expressed in

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<sup>16</sup>"I have no aesthetic, no philosophy, no theory. I love to write music. I always do it with love, or I don't do it at all. And I make a habit of accepting whatever work presents itself, no matter in what genre. Of course, there are types of compositions which I prefer to deal with; but a composer must DO EVERYTHING with diligence, with all the contemporary techniques which he commands, so that, after a life of labor, he can hope to see those works survive whose melodic lines are memorable, since it is melody alone (the only living element) which permits a work to endure."

Aaron Copland's dry comment on this: "You can't hope to arouse a following on the basis of any plain statement like that" (Copland, 1948, p.43).

this statement, a summing up of life-long themes. It is true that he always advocated working on one's craft, knowing all of it well. It is also true that he did not limit himself to any single type of composition, nor did he make a conscious effort to produce a body of work which evolved from one phase to another. All of this is expressed in this essay, as is the constantly recurring theme of the all-important melodic line.

Twenty years later, Milhaud was still decrying to young students the use of a system: "These things are a question of talent, not system. If it was a question of system, anyone in the street could do it; if it was easy, it wouldn't be worthwhile" (Salzman, 1961, p. II.9). It should be remembered, however, that Milhaud had a thorough grounding in counterpoint, and that in all probability his warning had to do with the facile application of formulas rather than with matters of craft and discipline.

Whether or not Milhaud felt that he was directly affected by the theories which swirled about him in his youth, it is nonetheless useful to modern readers to consider them. As a mature writer, he looked back on the appearance of Jean Cocteau's Le Coq et l'arlequin (The Cock and the Harlequin) with great equanimity, calling it "this

little treatise on aesthetics."<sup>17</sup> There is no hint there of the stir "this little treatise" caused, with its clarion call to a "purer" French music where precision, clarity, and order reigned once again, a music unencumbered by foreign (specifically, German) influences, and, closer to home, "Debussyism." (Milhaud himself venerated Debussy; it was the perversion of Debussy's art that he abhorred.)

Graf (1946) describes what he calls the credo of composers who developed in Europe during the first world war. Especially for the French, he writes, this credo was that "music is the pure art of tone motion," and was best expressed in what Stravinsky describes as "a language precise and firm, stripped of all pictorial embellishments" (p. 212).<sup>18</sup> Erik Satie was the first exponent of this new, pared down music. Other, younger, composers responded to

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<sup>17</sup>The cock in the title symbolized, according to Collaer, "the authenticity of an art based solely on Gallic sources and traditions," while the harlequin represented the confusion and distortions created in French music when foreign elements were introduced (1961, p. 219).

<sup>18</sup>This theme--the lack of pictorial embellishments--turned up when Milhaud neared his seventieth year. Eric Salzman (1961) describes a symposium on "Images in the Arts Today": "Milhaud sat and listened to the eloquent arguments of his eminent co-panelists Ben Shahn and James Baldwin. Finally, someone pushed a microphone his way and asked for his opinion on the subject. 'I don't,' he answered, 'mix up images with music. Sorry'" (p. II.9:5). When someone expressed disbelief, referring to the many compositions of Milhaud with extremely picturesque titles, Milhaud responded that the titles were added after the music was written.

the style in various ways, Milhaud with "brilliant, robust, easy flowing invention" (Graf, 1946, p. 212). Post-war composers turned to the music halls and carnivals for examples of the new, simplified music. For this, they were often criticized. Collaer, ever their defender, explains that the interest of the Six in this music was misunderstood.

What they admired was the absolute economy of each gesture of the acrobat, the tight-rope walker, and the magician. In the music hall there is no gesture or pose extraneous to the construction of the "act." . . . [M]usic hall art is objective, polished, and pure. (Collaer, 1961, p. 219)

It is easy now to see Milhaud and his friends as misunderstood victims of unfounded and unfair criticism. However, in the 1920s, it may have been easy to become confused about what Milhaud actually stood for. His association with a highly visible and unconventional group probably subjected his theories to a great deal of speculation, and his frequenting of the bar named Le Boeuf sur le Toit (after the name of a ballet by Cocteau, for which Milhaud wrote the music), a popular gathering spot for the avant-garde, contributed to the general view of Milhaud as an iconoclast.

Milhaud himself provided some of the ammunition which is used against him. The painter Francis Picabia, whom Milhaud describes merely as closely associated with the

beginning of cubism, was also closely associated with the beginning of the dadaist movement, having contributed to the first Dada Bulletin in 1920. One of his paintings was prominent in *Le Beuf sur le Toit* (the bar). Goddard (1979) describes the scene:

The reputation of *Le Boeuf* as the comfort station of the avant-garde continued to grow. Surrealist attempts to provoke and shock pervaded even the decor. A monstrous picture by Francis Picabia called L'Oeil Cacodylate dominated the bar. [Goddard explains in a note that "cacodyl is an evil-smelling liquid that ignites on contact with air" (p. 305).] The canvas was daubed with inscriptions: "My name has been Dada since 1892," wrote Darius Milhaud; "I like Salade," was Poulenc's contribution, punning on the word "salade" which also means chaos. [Salade is also the title of a work by Milhaud which he describes as a "choral ballet" in his autobiography (p. 157).] Beside this hung another, to which were fixed a matchbox, a piece of string, and an out-of-date invitation to a party given by Marthe Chenal. Across it all ran the startling legend, "Merde à celui qui le regarde." (p. 119)

What Milhaud meant by "My name has been Dada since 1892" is not clear. Perhaps this was merely the expression of high spirits; perhaps it was meaningless. This is a somewhat startling glimpse of a side of Milhaud which today seems uncharacteristic. In 1921, it may have seemed absolutely in character, and it is perhaps part of what provoked the reaction of critics such as Émile Vuillermoz.

In spite of the provocative behavior of Les Six, there is still a plausible explanation for their music hall phase. The most positive interpretation is that it was not an

expression of disdain for music or for the public, but a reaffirmation of life after the horrors of the war that was optimistically thought to have ended all wars. It was another manifestation of their effort to re-establish their national identity as composers and an attempt to get to more functional, more French, music.

All of the post-war developments in French music circles merely allowed Milhaud to develop in the way in which he was tending anyway, although the influence of Satie and Cocteau and the camaraderie Les Six cannot help having made a mark.

#### View of Composition as Life's Work

Collaer describes a new attitude among the young composers of Milhaud's era: "Musicians learned to approach composition with confidence, without that excess of scruples that paralyzed the drive of composers like Duparc, Dukas, and Délage" (Collaer, 1965, p. 230). For many of Milhaud's fellow composers, composing was "an everyday affair, a métier." The composers used the term métier, meaning "craft" or "trade," to describe their work, and shocked those who thought of composition as an activity to be undertaken only when inspiration struck (p. 230). Milhaud did not speak in hushed tones of his compositions; in fact,

because there were so many, he often did not remember individual compositions.<sup>19</sup>

For Milhaud, whose creative output has been compared to a vast, flowing river, inspiration was a matter of having paper and a pen full of ink. "Broadly, I should say composing is a matter of inspiration, and the source of inspiration is the fountain pen," he said in a Saturday Review interview with Douglas Cook (Cook, 1954, p. 43). In this, Milhaud was joined by Igor Stravinsky, who wrote, "I am far from denying the value of inspiration. . . . But [its] force is only called on when it is activated by an effort, and that effort is work. As an appetite comes with eating, it is just as true that work brings inspiration if inspiration is not present at first" (Collaer, 1961, p. 293).

Milhaud carried a notebook for ideas and is said to have been able to work anywhere. Collaer notes that writing a great deal, as Milhaud certainly did, makes for increased ease in the compositional process. But he also notes that Milhaud's works were often in a "period of gestation" for a long time, then quickly written down. This contributed to

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<sup>19</sup>"When a work is finished, I don't think of it any more. If it is performed, all right. I go of course to hear it. But if it is not, I just wait" (Milhaud, 1959, p. 97). "My students are always asking me [about individual compositions], but I forget the music too easily" (Salzman, 1961, p. II.9).



the impression of facility and lack of self-criticism which caused his prolific output to be regarded with suspicion.

French-trained American composer Ned Rorem is one who understands the drive that produced the huge outpouring of work from Milhaud. He notes that it is important to "[m]ake first, censor later," and says that, in this respect, Milhaud's approach influenced his own work (which he, too, refers to as his métier). But even in Rorem, admiration for Milhaud's productivity is tempered with doubts about the consistency of its quality. He intimates that, in some cases, quantity of uneven quality is a necessary evil, concluding that if Milhaud "made junk," he made a lot of it, a huge pile "that contained some sizable pearls" (Rorem, 1983, p. 61).

Junk or pearls by the world's standards, Milhaud was at peace with his "métier" and simply wrote. "There is no subject, situation, state of soul or object he does not translate into sonorous discourse," observes Collaer (1961, p. 234). Milhaud wrote, regardless of critical response and regardless of the public's attitude toward his work.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Milhaud assured Claude Rostand in one of several interviews that "Je puis vous assurer que ma sérénité à cet égard est profonde, réelle, totale." ("I can assure you that my serenity in that regard [i.e., with regard to critical response] is profound, real, total.") Part of that serenity he owed to his extraordinary wife, Madeleine. "J'ai d'ailleurs la chance d'avoir une femme qui partage complètement mes idées à ce sujet, ce qui est très important pour un compositeur" (Milhaud, 1952, p. 101). ("Besides, I

He spoke with Claude Rostand about the virtue of perseverance.

Il faut, si l'on croit à ce qu'on fait, et à condition de connaître son métier suffisamment pour être sûr de certaines choses, s'entêter. . . . Je crois connaître suffisamment mon métier pour exprimer ce que je veux de la manière que je veux. . . . Si [une oeuvre] ne plaît pas, c'est alors une question de sensibilité, non de fabrication. D'ailleurs, c'est surtout une question de temps: l'optique auditive des critiques change en dix ans" (Milhaud, 1952, p. 101-102).<sup>21</sup>

Milhaud's attitude toward the critics who savaged his work was wryly expressed in this same interview with Rostand. He could not refrain, he said, from reminding them of Jean Sibelius' quip on the subject of critics: "Visitez les villes du monde. Vous y trouverez parfois la statue d'un compositeur. Celle d'un critique, jamais" (p. 102).<sup>22</sup> That he himself had played the role of music critic did not soften his opinion.

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have the good fortune of having a wife who shares completely my ideas on this subject. This is very important for a composer.")

<sup>21</sup>"If one believes in what he's doing, he must (on condition of knowing his craft sufficiently to be sure about certain things) stubbornly persist. . . . I believe that I know my craft well enough to express what I want, in the manner I want. . . . If [a composition] doesn't find favor, then it's a question of sensibilities, not of workmanship. Besides, it's only a matter of time: the critics' auditory perspective will change in ten years."

<sup>22</sup>"Visit the cities of the world. You will find there, from time to time, the statue of a composer. The statue of a critic you will never find." (Emphasis added.)

Common Descriptions of Milhaud and of his Music

Milhaud is always described as prolific, as indeed he was. His works are most often met with extreme suspicion or are dismissed outright, on the grounds that no one who wrote that much music could have produced much of value. That he wrote quickly was also grounds for suspicion, most writers forgetting that, for Milhaud, the largest part of the compositional process took place in his mind, and then had only to be set down.

Myers (1971) points to the discussion by Norman Suckling, who wrote a biography of Gabriel Fauré, on the uneasiness with which the works of extremely productive composers are viewed. Suckling believed that Fauré's many works were underrated for reasons stemming from "a misapprehension that goes very deeply into the psychology of art, for it is due ultimately to the false value so often set on strenuousness, as such" (p.29). In other words, if a composer did not struggle with his muse, he was thought superficial.<sup>23</sup> Some writers are almost grudging in their praise of what they see as a few good works among the

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<sup>23</sup>This is not a notion promulgated exclusively by the critics of French music. In an earlier time, H. J. Moser wrote that Felix Mendelssohn--also from a wealthy family, also extremely well educated in his craft--had not suffered enough to produce real art. (See Eric Werner, Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and His Age. London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.)

masses. David Cox, for example in Stevens' A History of Song, speaks of Milhaud's "dreadful fertility," then comments ironically, "Whatever its quality . . . it is always a musical outpouring--even if the music means very little" (p. 221). He goes on to discuss briefly "Alissa," Quatre poèmes de Léo Latil, Poèmes juifs, Quatre chansons de Ronsard, and Tristesses. He calls Catalogue de fleurs and Machines agricoles humorous works. Although he refrains from the usual attack on these works, he, too, misses the point which Milhaud is so careful to make about these songs. (For quotation, see page 57.)

Jazz is often associated with the early writings of Milhaud and of his confrères in Les Six. Milhaud's enthusiasm for jazz was rather short-lived, the composer evidently losing interest in the style as soon as it became popular. At least one author is suspicious of this. Chris Goddard, in Jazz away from Home, suggests that the real reason that Milhaud dropped jazz was that he was unsuccessful at using it authentically. He praises Milhaud's understanding and use of polyrhythms, however, and says that this comes closer to the true music of Africa than American jazz does. No less an advocate than Leonard Bernstein, however, call La Création du monde a work of genius, in which jazz is translated masterfully into art music.

Although Milhaud himself says that he abandoned jazz, traces of jazz harmonies are detectable in some of his works, even in the songs. Trois chansons de troubadour, for example, contains echoes of jazz harmonies, although these were written well after Milhaud's enthusiasm for the style had "officially" passed.

Polytonality is almost synonymous with the name of Milhaud among some writers. Again, the definition of polytonality is open to question. One writer suggests that "poly"-tonality is a logical inconsistency, since the term tonality implies a single tonal center. Others have no quarrel with the concept, but disagree as to what it actually means in terms of compositional process and product. Whatever it means to writers now, to Milhaud it meant, not a repudiation of tradition, for he firmly believed that all work is rooted in tradition. Rather, for him, it was a logical development in tradition, one for which he found precedent in Bach. He said he had no need for 12-tone techniques, and his aim was not to shock or to defy established procedures, but to carry tonality to a further limit.

Milhaud is sometimes described as being ahead of his time. Articles in Perspectives of New Music (Rosen, 1963), the Los Angeles Times (Arlen, 1967), and the San Francisco Chronicle (Fried, 1971) enumerate some areas where Milhaud

was in the forefront: in the use of all types of small percussion and other instrumental ensembles, in the use of jazz, in experimentation in musique concrète, chance music, and computer music, for example. It is worth noting that Charles Koechlin, whom Milhaud greatly admired and regarded as influential in his own development, was also a markedly original composer. Myers' description of Koechlin applies equally well to Milhaud:

He never adhered to any particular school or system, but there was hardly any branch of music to which he did not make some important contribution, and hardly any style or idiom with which he did not experiment at one time or another--polytonality, atonality, strict contrapuntal polyphony, even strict twelve-note serialism; while some of his best and most characteristic work is couched in the simplest diatonic or modal language. (1971, p. 52)

In his early years, Milhaud was often described as truculent and highly opinionated. He was most certainly outspoken, and he held very strong opinions on many subjects. Milhaud himself writes, "I was sometimes violent, outspoken, and at the same time both curt and bashful" (1949/1953, p. 162). As a young man, he had declared, "Down with Wagner!" Late in life, his antipathy towards Wagner continued to find expression, tempered, however, with humor. "Ah, Wagner," he replied to a student's question. "Well, you know those leitmotifs: You hear four notes in the

orchestra and you know someone is coming. And what is the worst of all, he comes" (Salzman, 1965, p. II,9).

The perceived qualities of the composer often color the perception of his works, so that even Milhaud's compositions are on occasion described as truculent, flippant, or vulgar. (In spite of this, Milhaud fares better than some in Slonimsky's Lexicon of Musical Invective, a collection of highly creative, and in the present era probably libelous, music criticism.) Unfortunately, what is often seen as flippancy is misunderstood. Again, the benighted Machines agricoles and Catalogue de fleurs are good examples. If the former had simply been called Rustiques, says Collaer, there would have been no problem. Even good writers sometimes make their point at the expense of accuracy. Abraham (1974a) writes that Milhaud "abandoned" poetry in favor of the texts of seed catalogues. Neither portion of that statement is true. Milhaud never abandoned poetry; the texts of the Catalogue are poems by Lucien Daudet.

Early writings about Milhaud are often sharp in tone, but as the composer grew older, reports of him and his work grew gentler. Newspaper accounts of his work in California at Mills College and elsewhere in the area show that he was greatly admired and respected. (His own writings during his years in Oakland express his deep fondness for his adopted home.) A small article in the Los Angeles Times announcing

his resignation in 1972 from his post as composer-in-residence at Mills College (he was made professor emeritus in 1962) includes this: "Milhaud is ranked as France's greatest living composer and one of the most widely respected men in American music" ("Milhaud quits," 1971).

Aside from his contributions to the musical life in California, there is least one thing about which most writers agree. Milhaud, like his friend and mentor Satie, was an indefatigable champion of the young. Helping young composers was a habit he cultivated early. In his forties Milhaud had a reputation of long standing for having "discovered everybody, counseled everybody, seen to it that everybody got launched" (Bauer, 1942, p. 140). Collaer describes him as unstinting in his help for and interest in young composers.

When you have managed to write a really respectable piece of music, his efforts on your behalf will be prodigal; he will promote your music when he is asked to submit his own. Neither suspicion nor envy will ever come between you, for he is kindness and loyalty personified. Like Satie, he follows the maxim, "Acknowledge the young." (Collaer, 1988, p. 14)

That Milhaud was a man of intense loyalties is demonstrated by the lifelong tribute he paid to the teachers who had guided him in his youth. He always acknowledged his debt to Gédalge, and in his seventies, he was still careful to honor Charles Koechlin and Albéric Magnard, of the Schola



Cantorum, whose works "he would like to see resurrected" (Salzman, 1961, p. II.9).

### The Songs

A great deal has been written in an effort to define the terms used to describe music written in this century, for those terms mean different things to different people. Ernst Krenek, for example, distinguishes carefully among the terms "contemporary," "modern," and "new." He defines contemporary music as that which "is written by contemporaries of the person using the term" (Krenek, 1939, p. 63). Modern music, he says, is properly used to suggest certain characteristics, and refers to more than the date of composition. Modern music, then, is "that part of our contemporary music which emerges from the whole by a visible deviation from tradition in its material, its style, or in some other essential factor" (p. 65). New music is defined as "the type which, because of its essential qualities, experiences the greatest opposition to its conversion into merchandise" (p. 66).

Milhaud takes a different viewpoint in an article entitled "'Modern Music' Is Nonsense":

I heartily dislike the term "modern" as applied to music. "Modern music" seems to mean something quite alien to the accumulated flow of music that has come down to us from the past. What nonsense! There are only two kinds of music--good and bad, and some of each has been produced in every age.

Many works of the thirteenth century reveal "modern" elements. The term I prefer to use is contemporary. That serves to place the music in point of time without characterizing it as to form. (Milhaud, 1949, p. 58)

Calling his works "contemporary" or "twentieth-century," then, seems appropriate, and avoids the evaluative connotations that "modern" and "new" have for some writers.

It is odd, perhaps, and a peculiarly twentieth-century phenomenon, that, so few years from a new century, musicians are still concerned with incorporating the music of this century into the repertoire. (This problem is discussed further in Chapter V, "Description and Analysis of Selected Songs.") Part of the problem of incorporating Milhaud's songs into a college voice studio curriculum is that they are so little known, if writings on Milhaud's output are any indication. Milhaud himself wrote relatively little about any of his works (perhaps because, as he admitted, he remembered little about individual works once they were written.) In his autobiography, he devoted more space to a description of the dramatic works, and mentioned the songs only in passing, commenting simply that he wrote songs on certain texts, or occasionally that someone had performed some of his songs. What little he does write, he writes with obvious affection for the works.

The lack of knowledge about the songs saves them, at least, from the censure which has been heaped on his other

works. In all of Slonimsky's Lexicon of Musical Invective, there is not a single reference to Milhaud's songs. Even the larger scale works for voice and orchestra are omitted. Whether this is simply reflective Slonimsky's choice of material for inclusion in the reference or of the fact that the songs are virtually unknown, hence uncriticized, may be open to question.

The relative infrequency with which the songs are mentioned may have more to do with prevalent attitudes about songs as a genre than with these particular songs. Again, Nicolas Slonimsky provides an example. In his massive tome, Music Since 1900, Slonimsky sets out to show the "inner headlines" of music, events which, although not particularly significant at the time of their occurrence, prove to have an effect on later musical development. He admits to resorting to some sensationalism in the choice of inclusions. In almost 1600 pages, there is mention of only one of Milhaud's song cycles, Catalogue de fleurs, which he describes as "a surrealistic florilegium with melodious characterizations of seven flowers, set to music with a fine Parisian flair" (p. 398). It is not uncommon for the unusual cycles Machines agricoles and Catalogue de fleurs to be cited, if any are. These songs are often misunderstood, and Milhaud routinely taken to task for his supposed lack of serious intent in choosing their texts. Contrary to what

people may have believed, however, Milhaud did not select these texts in jest or out of eccentricity. He thought Lucien Daudet's little poems, "inspired by the florist's catalogue," were delightful, and he found the uproar over the songs extremely annoying.

Not a single critic understood what had impelled me to compose these works, or that they had been written in the same spirit as had in the past led composers to sing the praises of harvest-time. . . . I have never been able to fathom why sensible beings should imagine that any artist would spend his time working, with all the agonizing passion that goes into the process of creation, with the sole purpose of making fools of a few of them. (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 124)

But that attitude has persisted. Hansen (1961) cites the translated text of the second song, "Begonias, Aurora, double blossom, apricot mixed with coral, very pretty, rare and unusual," and then expresses the opinion that "there is something impertinent about setting words like these to music when one remembers the hundreds of 'flower' poems set by the romantic composers, such as 'Du bist wie eine Blume' ('Thou art like a flower')" (p. 118). It might be noted that the flower songs which Hansen extols (whose subjects love and droop and often die among conveniently placed minor chords) are in a literal sense no less nonsensical than the maligned offerings of the Catalogue.

It is odd that so little space should be devoted to the songs, when Milhaud was so strongly influenced by texts.

Several authors do agree that Milhaud's most important works are his songs and his dramatic works. Songs were among his very first compositions, and he continued to write them throughout his life. Odd, too, that the songs should be overlooked when Milhaud always believed that melody is the very essence of music. Time after time he writes of the compositional process, saying that the life of the work hangs on the melody. And time after time other writers, even those in whom Milhaud's oeuvre as a whole find no special favor, comment that he is above all a lyric, melodic composer.

Sources are perhaps more notable for their lack of commentary on the songs than otherwise. A few writers state that Milhaud's vocal works are his strongest, but these writers are usually referring to the stage works. Some even suggest that, as a whole, the best music produced in the twentieth century has been for voice. But as for specific commentary on Milhaud's songs, there is little, even in those sources which purport to be complete surveys of twentieth-century music. Burbank's Twentieth Century Music, a continuation of Slonimsky's Music Since 1900, is an example. Slonimsky praises this as a truly remarkable accomplishment, comprehensive in scope. Burbank, however, like Slonimsky before him, gives little attention to the genre of solo song. Among the entries under instrumental

and vocal music headings covering a period of time from January 16, 1920, through November 13, 1973, not a single solo song of any composer is listed.

Of Milhaud's vast output of vocal solo, the same few are mentioned repeatedly in surveys of his work. The nearly infamous Catalogue de fleurs and Machines agricoles referred to above are often discussed, as are the Poèmes juifs and other "Jewish" works. Alissa, on a text from Gide's La Porte étroite, is frequently alluded to, but, in the main, the vocal works are dealt with very lightly, if at all.

Milhaud does have his champions, however; the most outspoken of them is Paul Collaer, a long-time friend and associate of the composer. Collaer, in his Darius Milhaud (first published in 1947, updated in 1982, and published in English in 1988) and A History of Modern Music gives the most comprehensive discussion of Milhaud's songs, though often his comments are more in the nature of description than of analysis.

Twenty-seven years before Collaer's book appeared, Henry Prunières wrote in La Nouvelle Revue Française that Milhaud had written, already, an incredible number of songs, some of which Prunières found quite beautiful, others of which he found dreadful. Nonetheless, he wrote that if one did not become dosconcerted by the use of "a redoubtable polyphony," or by unusual turns of melody, or by the

presence of unaccustomed harmonies, one should find in these songs "a return to the aesthetic of Schumann and of Mendelssohn, expressed in new compositional practices" (Prunières, 1920, p. 766).

A few doctoral dissertations have dealt to some degree with the songs, although in these the songs are treated more often as objects for harmonic analysis than as vocal literature. One exception to this general rule is that of Natoma Noble, whose DMA dissertation deals with what she describes as the neoclassic aesthetic in Poèmes juifs and Chants populaires hébraïques.

Newspaper articles provide the most consistently positive reviews of the songs, although the literature covered is, of course, limited to those few titles performed. The brief notice of the American premiere of Chants populaires hébraïques by New York Times music critic Harold Schonberg (1961, p. 19:1) contains the surprising observation that the songs "have always been attractive." Schonberg continues, "[T]he Chants populaires hébraïques proved no exceptions. They were delightful, exotically colored and sophisticated, with the chic so typical of Milhaud's music at its best."

Over a nine-year period (1971-1980), Robert Commanday of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote enthusiastically of

Milhaud and his compositions. Commanday was aware of just how few of the composer's works had been performed.

All the Milhaud performances here still have hardly scratched the surface of a repertoire which is the broadest of any living composer. With the readiness of Mozart and the ear of Rossini the prolific master has composed in every genre and is still going strong. (1971a, p. 33)

Commanday's reviews of the songs were warm, even if his review of a given performance was not. On one occasion he wrote, "The songs [Trois poèmes] had to speak for themselves, since the vocal rendition was not appealing" (1971b, n.p.). What these songs said to Commanday was evidently eloquent despite their unappealing rendering, for he wrote that they have

the power of suggestion, understatement, not rhetoric, a sense of freedom in restraint. . . . The style is everywhere vocal, the more wonder because [it] is syllabic and economical, with no rhapsodic flights commonly associated with lyricism. Milhaud's songs are jewels in the great chanson tradition. (1971b, n.p.)

Six years after Milhaud's death, Commanday reviewed a concert devoted to Milhaud's music, including Four Poems of Catullus, for soprano and violin. "Milhaud's songs are both affecting and subtle, immediate and arch, descriptive and beguiling. They touch the nerve of the poetry. Where the poetry is light, the music makes the thought seem more important in human terms" (1980a, n.p.).



### Musical Analysis

It is important to this study to analyze (or at least to describe) Milhaud's songs in a way which reflects his compositional technique. Accordingly, the present section considers some writings which suggest analytical approaches to Milhaud's songs. Although a detailed critique of twentieth-century theoretical sources is beyond the scope of the present study, it is hoped that an examination of some sources of special interest will provide a conceptual framework for an analysis of the songs.

One of the primary difficulties with the analysis of Milhaud's music is his eclecticism. Despite his superb technical command of several standard, readily identifiable twentieth-century compositional techniques (such as polytonality, the ostinato, and the building of chords in intervals other than thirds), Milhaud refuses to be bound by any school, and he tends at times to write in a free, almost improvisatory style, producing passages which are not easy to classify.

Four sources will be considered below; the importance and relevance of each will be discussed, and useful analytical concepts will be summarized. The approaches taken in these sources fall into two general categories:

(a) attempts to use conventional harmonic theory,<sup>24</sup> with some modifications, to understand Milhaud's compositions, and (b) attempts to use Milhaud's compositions to illustrate a new theoretical approach.

### René Lenormand

In 1913 René Lenormand, a composer himself, wrote a treatise on harmony which discussed some procedures that had been evolved by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French composers. Lenormand's approach was to explain the new procedures in terms of traditional harmony. "Modern" chords were explained either as combinations or alterations of conventional structures (such as triads or seventh chords) or as the results of traditional contrapuntal procedures (such as pedal points) carried further than before.

The Lenormand text (1913/1915) is of interest because it represents practical harmonic thinking in France during Milhaud's formative years. It is not known whether Milhaud himself was familiar with Lenormand's book (though it is likely that a young composer eager for technical knowledge

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<sup>24</sup>Considering Milhaud's own interest in counterpoint, which as a theoretical discipline he valued much more highly than harmony, it is interesting that the analytical literature appears to contain no extensive discussion of counterpoint in Milhaud's music.

would be acquainted with theoretical publications appearing at that time in Paris); nevertheless, the Lenormand book is offered as an example of ideas that were part of the intellectual and musical atmosphere surrounding innovative French music at the time Milhaud was learning his craft.

Lenormand insists that this work is not didactic, but rather that it is "a document of transition between the treatises of the past and those of the future, a sort of inventory of modern harmony" (p. x). Again, "We have no intention of proposing a new system or of writing a treatise on harmony; we present merely a collection of examples which we have explained as far as possible through the medium of the earlier [i.e., common-practice] technique" (p. xii). This explicit reliance on traditional concepts is the salient feature of Lenormand's book.

Judging from the frequency of examples cited, Lenormand's inventory of modern techniques concerns primarily the impressionism of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel (certainly the dominant influence on the French composers at the turn of the century), but it includes also composers such as Gabriel Fauré, Henri Rousseau, Charles Koechlin, Florent Schmitt, Emmanuel Chabrier, Alfred Bruneau, and others in the generation preceding Les Six.

Lenormand emphasizes (as does Milhaud) the importance of technical mastery. He also emphasizes that technical mastery alone is not enough. In the Preface he writes,

that which makes the new school particularly interesting is the considerable effort it is making to free itself from the laws of the older technique without having any other guide save the intuition of a new idea of beauty. Certain authors--and this is a widespread idea in the world of amateurs--imagine that in these days one can write "no matter what." They misunderstand the character of the evolution to-day. The most daring composers are all technicians of the greatest ability. Those who unite to such mastery the greater gift of a truly musical temperament bring themselves naturally to the first rank. The others, complicating the harmony simply with the pleasure of the grammarian, class themselves rather among the theorists than among the creators, which nevertheless assures them an important place. (p. ix)

In accordance with his emphasis on solid technique in the service of the "gift" of musicality, Lenormand also makes the point that the "modern" style is more than a mere collection of technical devices:

The harmony called modern, considered as a means of technique does not suffice to constitute a modern music. Such compositions, where are to be found gathered together all the new devices, often give only a negative impression. On the other hand, some works based on harmonies relatively simple can invoke an intensely modern atmosphere. Above the manner of writing there is, therefore, the modern inspiration, and the musicians of classical education make a mistake when they complicate their harmonies thinking thus to modernise themselves. Before all else they must write with the sincerity of their inspiration and of their feeling. (p. ix)

Each of Lenormand's first six chapters covers some topic in traditional theory. In each chapter, brief introductory remarks are followed by several examples, after which the chapter concludes with a set of "Deductions"--that is, observations of practical modern, as opposed to traditional, usage.

In Chapter I, Lenormand discusses the traditional prohibition of parallel fifths. These, as one might have anticipated, are forbidden no more. In place of the absolute prohibition of traditional harmonic theory, Lenormand offers a vague guideline: parallel fifths "may always be used where the composer has a definite aim . . . ; but they are still forbidden whenever they are the result of awkwardness or lack of skill in writing" (p. 12).

Chapter II concerns seventh chords. The essence of this chapter is that the traditional treatment of these chords may be bypassed, and that, indeed, the seventh chord may be used in almost endless parallel motion in all of its parts; in other words, the standard tonal harmonic progression involving root motion by descending fifth is no longer required. The effect of Lenormand's revision of the "rule" is that now the seventh is less of a functional chord, and more of a coloristic chord. Lenormand cites a passage from Chabrier, Le roi malgré lui, in which a peculiar series of inverted seventh chords appears (p. 19):

a first inversion G dominant seventh, followed by a first inversion A dominant seventh, followed by a first inversion B half-diminished seventh, and ending with a second-inversion A dominant seventh. There is no apparent traditional harmonic logic to this chord succession, and the dissonant notes (the "sevenths") within each of the first three chords do not appear to resolve. The point, rather, seems to be that the parallelism between the chords is a "modern" technique which overrides the traditional rules concerning harmonic progression and the resolution of dissonance. Chapter III is similar to Chapter II, but is devoted to a discussion of the use of the ninth chord and its inversions.

In Chapter IV, "Preparation of Discords," Lenormand makes the characteristically forthright statement, "At the present day all discords may be approached without preparation. It matters not what modern work we may look at to be convinced of this" (p. 43). The chapter contains a discussion of the dissonant interval of the second, of which Lenormand writes, "The whole modern school seems to be hypnotised by the interval of the second, which it writes at every turn" (p. 45). Interestingly, Lenormand explains many chords containing seconds from a melodic point of view: the two most common such chords are "the sixth added to the Common Chord [i.e., major triad]" and "the ninth added to

the Common Chord" (p. 45). Both of these structures, according to Lenormand, arise from an *appoggiatura* (a melodic upper neighbor note to one member of the chord) which does not resolve, but instead is retained to sound simultaneously with the note of its resolution (pp. 45-46). Lenormand's awareness of the melodic origin of these harmonies may be significant for analysis.

In a similar vein, Chapter V concerns "Notes Foreign to the Chords," "Passing Notes," and "Ornaments." In each of these cases, some note (or combination of notes) is used to decorate another, more important combination of notes. The pertinent rules and principles of traditional theory are extended in this chapter. Not only single notes, but entire chords of traditional and non-traditional structure can be passing; neighbor notes do not need to belong to the same register as the notes which they connect; either passing notes or ornaments can occur in more than one voice, at any interval.

Chapter VI concerns "*Appoggiaturas*," of which Lenormand writes,

Chord-changing, either at the same moment as the resolution of an *appoggiatura*, or during the continuance of the *appoggiatura*, is a procedure which may be found analysed in treatises on Harmony. The suppression of the note of resolution of the *appoggiatura* is a recent practice. This artifice opens a perspective entirely new to lovers of the unforeseen. One may thus write, by conjunct degrees, the upper or lower auxiliary of any note whatever of a chord,

and then not trouble about it afterwards. . . .  
 But there must be good reason for having recourse  
 to this means; used at all awkwardly it will  
 easily give the impression of incoherence. Good  
 taste alone can serve as a guide. (p. 61)

Lenormand seems uncomfortable with this brave new world  
 of unrestricted appoggiaturas: he seems unable to provide  
 exact prescriptions for their use, other than that they are  
 used, and with considerable (but not unlimited) freedom.  
 The discussion in the Chapter may be summarized in three  
 points ("Deductions"): (a) appoggiaturas, in the modern  
 style, need not (indeed, usually do not) resolve;  
 (b) appoggiaturas, in the modern style, may appear with the  
 note of resolution; and (c) entire chords can function as  
 appoggiatura-chords, in a manner analogous to the more  
 common use of single-note appoggiaturas (p. 69).

Chapter VII is a short chapter with a title which  
 indicates its broad scope: "Ancient Devices: Imitations,  
 Sequences. Bar-Lines. False Relations. Pedals. Melodic  
 Intervals." In previous chapters, Lenormand had been  
 concerned to explain some aspects of the modern style in  
 terms of traditional harmonic structures. In Chapter VII,  
 he attempts to explain other aspects of the modern style in  
 terms of some traditional devices of counterpoint.

By imitations, Lenormand means the exact or near-exact  
 repetition of short melodic fragments. About such  
 "imitations," Lenormand says, "This artifice of traditional



writing tends to disappear. Certain composers have completely renounced its use; others, and they, perhaps, form the greatest number, use it only to enhance the piquancy of the harmonic colouring" (p. 70). Lenormand is less accepting of sequences, or repetitions of melodic patterns, as illustrated in the following passage:

For long, in technical studies, an excessive use was made of sequences, a matter which can only be regarded as deplorable, for it inculcates in the pupil a taste for easy formulas. . . . The examples which one meets with seem to have been inspired by a recollection of the school, rather than by any aesthetic idea. Nevertheless, in certain cases they may correspond with a dramatic sentiment or assist the expansion of the melodic outline. (p. 70)

Lenormand's discussion of pedals is relatively brief and general:

The solid pedals of the tonic and dominant on which all the masters have piled up vivid progressions, preparations for the great climax, ingenious "stretti," etc., have not failed to come under the influence of modern times. A melodic outline may be taken as a pedal; in other cases the pedal is so short that it may be called a "passing pedal." If, in their origin (10th century), pedals were a naive procedure for sustaining the voice, they have become, in modern writing, a source of harmonic complexity. (p. 72)

It is worthwhile summarizing Lenormand's observations on the use of pedals, because Milhaud appears to be very fond of this device. From Lenormand's observations and examples of pedal usage, one can discover many extensions of the classical concept of pedal. Some of the more pertinent

observations are summarized below:

1. The pedal can consist of a short phrase, rather than merely a single note (p. 75). This type of pedal is often referred to as an ostinato.
2. The pedal does not necessarily have to be in the bass; notes which are quite distant from the prevailing harmonies may appear in inner or upper voices (pp. 78-79).
3. The pedal can consist of two or more simultaneous notes (pp. 76-77). For example, one pedal in the bass may be accompanied by another pedal in an upper voice.
4. A pedal need not be merely a sustained tone, but can be melodically activated and ornamented (p. 76).

A topic of particular interest to the present study is that of melodic intervals, by which Lenormand appears to mean singable intervals. Lenormand's discussion of this topic could almost be read as a piece of advice to the young composer contemplating writing for the voice; accordingly, it is worth quoting at some length.

All treatises on harmony devote a chapter to the melodic intervals permitted or forbidden.

Nevertheless, the Breton labourer, the boatman on the Volga, the camel driver of the desert--to whom Nature has suggested admirable songs, as though to deride professional musicians--none of these anonymous composers have consulted treatises of harmony to know what they have the right to sing and often they have used melodic intervals said to be forbidden.

That there are some intervals more or less easy to attack is incontestable, but a "musician" will

write no melodies except those possible to sing, if he writes for the voice; and instruments do not recognize difficulties of intonation.

The question may, therefore, be looked at under two aspects:

1. In writing for instruments all intervals are possible;

2. In writing for the voice the freedom of writing is limited only by greater or less facility of execution. . . .

Voices doubled by an accompaniment can approach all intervals. Voices without accompaniment, or with an accompaniment that does not double the voice parts, hesitate in approaching certain intervals. (p. 80)

Lenormand then lists several intervals which are difficult to sing: doubly augmented unison, doubly diminished octave, augmented third, diminished sixth, doubly augmented fourth, doubly diminished fifth. Many of the difficulties arise from the notation of these intervals, rather than the sound: "We may conclude that the voice is opposed to the subtleties of our system, because the same sounds (tempered) become easy to approach by changing the notation" (p. 81).

Lenormand gives an example: C to C-double sharp is difficult to sing, but its enharmonic equivalent C to D is easy. The leap of a doubly diminished octave, from  $c^1$  to c-double flat<sup>2</sup> is difficult, but the enharmonic equivalent  $c^1$  to b-flat<sup>1</sup> is easy (p. 81). Lenormand concludes with some excellent advice to composers of songs: "The composer

might do well to sing all he has written for the voice,  
. . . [in which case] he would be able to judge if it were  
possible. . . . But there are no forbidden melodic  
intervals" (p. 81).

Chapter VIII, "To End a Piece," is brief, and Lenormand uses it mainly to give examples of modern endings which do not follow the traditional V-I or IV-I cadential patterns. Chapter IX is titled "Scales--Tonality." Most important of the many possibilities Lenormand mentions are the pentatonic scale, the ecclesiastical modes, and some theoretical and "Oriental" variations (p. 94). One is left with the impression that the modern composer is free to adapt any of several exotic systems, or, indeed, to formulate his own. For purposes of the present study, it seems useless to list each of the many possibilities: the variety of possible scales is so great that one has to examine the music first, and then extract the scales.

Lenormand's discussion of scales concludes with Chapter X, "On the Whole-Tone Scale," an extended presentation of that construction. Lenormand is careful to point out the fact that the notes of the whole-tone scale tend to be grouped into augmented triads (p. 97). If acoustically equivalent notes with different spellings (for example,

C-sharp and D-flat) are regarded as musically equivalent,<sup>25</sup> then there are only two different augmented chords in any whole-tone scale (p. 98). These two augmented chords, however, can be combined in many different ways; for example, they can be placed against each other in contrary motion (p. 99). The central point of the chapter is that the whole-tone scale and the harmonic formations derived from it (such as the augmented triads) are of exceptional fluidity, and that different whole-tone gestures can be combined effortlessly.

The penultimate chapter, Chapter XI, consists of a large collection of "Various Harmonies." These are presented primarily by citation of examples from the literature, with very brief explanatory notes. Lenormand's attitude toward harmony (and harmonic analysis) is stated succinctly: "Chords are written for their sonority; it is therefore not necessary that they should all be fully explained" (p. 107).

This appreciation of sonority for its own sake can be considered characteristic of the modern French style of composition. Although a chord can arise from the motion of

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<sup>25</sup>Lenormand indicates that he does regard these notes as equivalent by his comment, cited above, that "the voice is opposed to the subtleties of our system, because the same sounds. . . . become easy to approach by changing the notation" (p. 81).

several independent voices, the chord is valued sonically, rather than contrapuntally, once it has arisen.

Counterpoint, in other words, is valuable chiefly as a means of generating attractive, interesting, or provocative sonorities. In Lenormand's words,

In music on a contrapuntal basis there is no occasion to look for the chords; what should be observed is the movement of the parts, the relation of the simultaneous sounds of which may at certain moments be classed as "chords" (p. 113).

There is one interesting reference in this chapter to polytonality. Lenormand cites one example by Gabriel Dupont, in which "The right hand plays in E minor and the left hand in C major" (p. 115). Thus, the use of two keys simultaneously is anticipated in the Lenormand book, and anticipated in a context that implies that the chief function of polytonality is to generate provocative sonorities. Polytonality is thus merely one of many devices for this purpose, and is not central to Lenormand's system.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>In his textbook, Twentieth Century Counterpoint: A Guide for Students, Humphrey Searle devotes an entire chapter to "Milhaud and Polytonality," in which he discusses the contrapuntal basis of polytonality. Searle, however, disputes the usefulness of polytonality as a compositional technique, and hence as an analytical concept, on the grounds that

[w]hen the musical fabric as a whole is so chromatic and "dissonant" . . . as most polytonal works are, there is really no reason why one part should stick firmly to the diatonic scale of one

The relationship between classical technique and the newer technique (as Lenormand describes it), and the role of the older concepts in the analysis of Milhaud's works and those of other composers of his generation, is discussed in Chapter XII, Lenormand's concluding chapter. Since modern composers, as part of their training, studied the classical disciplines of harmony and counterpoint, Lenormand argues that the works of these composers may be analyzed with the aid of older treatises on those disciplines. There is a clear connection between new music and classical technique.

At the present time, we have, old and young, been "moulded" by a traditional technique, which does not leave us at liberty to invent another. To the musicians of tomorrow belongs the task of building a new musical system responding to the needs of composers' thoughts. The music of to-day will be an excellent preparation. To suppose that melody will disappear in the midst of harmonic complications is, we believe, an error. At first, that complication will exist only for musicians of an incomplete education, and afterwards, we may be certain that the melody will extricate itself as readily from the modern harmonies as it has extricated itself from the harmonies of Schumann and Wagner. These, to a contemporary of Mozart,

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particular key; it would lose nothing (and in fact would probably gain something) by being allowed to move freely and chromatically. This is what most composers have realized in recent years, and that is why polytonality of the orthodox Milhaud type . . . is hardly ever practised nowadays. Nevertheless, it has had an important influence on the development of contemporary music. (p. 43)

Again the question of terminology arises. Drake (1989) writes that Milhaud employed polymodality, which, he says, is "incorrectly but more commonly referred to as polytonality . . ." (p. 4).

would pass for veritable ramblings. . . . Besides, was not Mozart accused of lack of melody, in spite of the simplicity of his harmonies? (p. 141)

Certain composers may have extended this tradition by developing traditional techniques, following the example of innovative masters such as Schumann, Chopin, Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, and Saint-Saëns. Lenormand notes, however, that modern composers, unlike their predecessors, "have completely modified the harmonic idiom at the same time as the form" (p. 142). Nonetheless, the "strand which connects [modern music] with the classical technique" (p. 140) is clearly in evidence.

It is important to note that Lenormand often praises the "modern style," but, apart from some speculative material on temperament and a twelve-tone notational system that eliminates accidentals ("Preface," pp. vi-viii), he describes it exclusively in terms of conventional, common-practice concepts. The theoretical basis for "modern" composition consists of a wide variety of liberties; the old "rules" are still valid as a foundation for composition, but they are now stretched and extended in myriad ways.

### Later Authors

Richard B. Bobbitt's dissertation, entitled "The Harmonic Idiom and the Works of 'Les Six'" (1963), contains an exhaustive attempt to formulate a theory underlying the



compositional process of Milhaud and the other five composers of Les Six. Bobbitt's many points of agreement with Lenormand need not be detailed here. Of more interest are a few major disagreements.

Like Lenormand, Bobbitt regards most of Milhaud's works as "tonal." Unlike Lenormand, Bobbitt believes that the peculiar tonality of Milhaud and other members of Les Six cannot readily be understood in terms of traditional theory (Bobbitt, 1963, pp. 1-3). Thus Bobbitt is faced with the problem of understanding and describing apparently arbitrary structures in the course of performing his analytical task. This task has resulted in a highly complicated theoretical system, the value of whose application to the task at hand--the analytical description of Milhaud's songs--is not clear.

The extended tonality of Les Six, however, does share one feature with traditional tonality: some structures are more important than others, i.e., some chords--of whatever structure--are passing, or transitional in nature, whereas others are more stable, more important. Bobbitt describes a concept implied by Lenormand, the concept of "transitional harmonic structures" (p. 7). These are chords which do not belong to any key, though they connect chords which do. Bobbitt uses traditional Roman numerals to label the stable chords; the transitional chords are not labelled.

Both Bobbitt and Lenormand assume that chordal structures may be understood in relation to conventional tertian harmony (i.e., chords based upon the superposition of intervals of the third), although both writers do also allow for alternatives (for example, chords built in fourths). However, the Bobbitt's assumption is that "chords [built] in fourths and fifths do not form a basic part of the harmonic idiom of Les Six" (pp. 14-15).

Bobbitt does, however, address the problem of chords which cannot be understood solely in terms of a stack of thirds in his discussion of "Common Chords Not Within Uniform Systems." These are the "added tone" chords. "It is not unusual for chords in thirds to contain additional, non-harmonic tones which thicken, but do not normally distort the basic chord quality--i.e., the chord structure may be regarded as independent of the added tone" (p. 16).

Like Lenormand, Bobbitt recognizes the major or minor triad with added 6th and added 9th as the principle varieties of these added-note chords (p. 17). Unlike Lenormand, he does not attempt to derive these added notes from melodic events (Lenormand had derived them from the unresolved appoggiatura). Bobbitt explicitly extends the scope of these added-note chords to include the following structures:

1. Major triad with added 6th and added 9th.
2. Minor triad with added 6th and added 9th.
3. Major seventh with added tritone.
4. Major triad with added raised second (p. 17).

Writing in 1963, Bobbitt attempts a retrospective characterization of different periods of Milhaud's style. Bobbitt appears to believe that Milhaud was primarily concerned with harmony in his early years (p. 51), but that he became more interested in counterpoint and melodic aspects in his later years, with a "transitional period" falling in between (pp. 51, 58, 80). Bobbitt summarizes the three periods:

1. c. 1915-25, characterized by Milhaud's interest in "the possibilities inherent in combinations of various structural sonorities";
2. c. 1925-45, "contain[ing] many works of a transitional nature in which neither the linear nor the vertical harmonic gains supremacy";
3. 1945-1955, "largely filled with compositions in which linear diatonicism is the decisive stylistic factor" (p. 127).

It is necessary to view Bobbitt's three-part period division of Milhaud's works with skepticism, however. Milhaud himself denied that his work could be divided into periods. Further, Bobbitt's three-part division is too pat to be convincing, and too general to have much explanatory power in the context of analyses of particular songs.

Bobbitt does make the interesting point that "Milhaud's concern with mechanical devices as an aid to planning and the achievement of logical proportions is evidenced by his persistent usage of mid-composition 'pivot' techniques which, as often as not, resulted in almost literal retrograde passages" (p. 138). The proof of this assertion--that the palindrome is a distinctive aspect of Milhaud's style--lies in the analyses themselves.

Samuel Miller Trickey's dissertation, "Les Six," (1955) offers very little that is analytically new, but he does discuss some aspects of Milhaud's own attitudes which are analytically suggestive. For example, Trickey emphasizes the importance of melody as the predominant element in the musical texture (p. 47), and he develops the idea that at least one source of polytonality could have been in imitative counterpoint, in particular, in the exact imitation of a melody at an interval incompatible with the original tonality (p. 148). These seem to be important insights for the purposes of the present study, because they imply that there may be a simple, melodic principle behind even the most complicated harmonic structures to be found in Milhaud's songs.

All of the analytical sources discussed to this point rely for their explanatory power on traditional concepts of harmony and counterpoint. Keith W. Daniel (1982) offers a

preliminary attempt to apply a recently developed analytical technique, set theory, to the analysis of works by Milhaud and Poulenc. Set theory attempts to describe collections of pitches solely in terms of their internal relationships (and their relationships to other collections of pitches), without reference to any key. Set theory therefore bypasses any need to rely on traditional theory or extend it, and thus promises to become an objective analytical system of virtually universal application (at least insofar as the difficult non-traditional music of the twentieth century is concerned). It is not surprising that the attempt should have been made to apply it to the works of Milhaud, which are difficult to analyze in several respects.

Unfortunately, Daniel's study rests on two faulty premises. First, Daniel equates polytonality with atonality, a facile equation suggested by the simultaneous appearance of sharps and flats. "[Milhaud's] polytonal music has the 'look' of atonal music," Daniel writes (p. 22). This is not a convincing reason for assuming, as the user of set theory must, that there is no tonal center or that the tonal center is unimportant.

Second, Daniel establishes a procedure for analysis that deliberately minimizes the importance of Milhaud's diatonicism. After stating that Milhaud "tended to employ simple, folk-like, diatonic melodies throughout his career,"

Daniel deliberately rejects analytical data involving harmonic structures which are diatonic (p. 23n), citing as his authority for this decision an article on such structures in the music of Schoenberg (p. 24).

Given the seeming unsuitability of this method to Milhaud, it is perhaps not surprising that Daniel reaches the conclusion that

many passages of Milhaud's music which at first appear to be atonal . . . are . . . constructed of simultaneous tonal and/or modal gestures. Thus there is an intimate link between atonality and polytonality in Milhaud's music; I suspect, in fact, that there is little genuine atonality in Milhaud. (pp. 26-27)

One must concur with Daniel's conclusion, if not with his analytical method: there is little atonality in Milhaud's works, and therefore it would appear useless to apply a technique developed for the purpose of analyzing atonal music to the songs of Milhaud. Although some future theorist may indeed develop a way of applying set theory to Milhaud's works, this approach, as practiced by Daniel, does not appear to yield any real insight into Milhaud's compositional approach.

In conclusion, the approach of Lenormand, slightly extended and modified by later writers, appears to be the most fruitful for the analytical and descriptive purposes of the present study. Milhaud (like many of his contemporaries writing in similar styles) seems to have proceeded mainly by

adapting traditional harmonic and contrapuntal techniques, and that historical fact alone lends credence to an attempt to analyze them in terms of traditional rules of harmony and counterpoint (with modification as necessary for the analysis of individual works).

### CHAPTER III MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### General Research Design

This research was guided by both pedagogical and musicological aims. These aims were expressed in the four purposes and in the corresponding research questions stated in Chapter I. Addressing each purpose and research question required the use of standard methods of musicological research, as well as the collection of other types of data.

To provide background for the songs and to determine their stylistic characteristics and, hence, their possible use in the voice studio, musicological/historical research procedures were used. These procedures included

1. the examination of primary sources;
2. the consultation of secondary sources;
3. the examination of selected musical scores and selected song texts.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>In his Introduction to Musicology, which many scholars recognize as an authoritative source on musicological research techniques, Glen Haydon describes primary sources as "the original sources of information concerning historical fact." Barzun and Graff (1985) note that "a primary source is distinguished from a secondary by the fact that the former gives the words of the witnesses or first recorders of an event" (p. 124). Secondary sources,



In this study, primary sources included writings by Darius Milhaud (essays, autobiography, lectures, articles) and published interviews of the composer. Secondary sources included critical and historical material written about the composer. Milhaud's songs, even though they might properly have been classified as primary sources, were treated as a separate category of information in this study because of their nature (music and poetry, as opposed to prose).

To establish current practice in college voice studio regarding the songs, it was necessary to supplement this musicological research with a sample survey of educational procedures in established voice studios. For this purpose, a questionnaire addressed to studio teachers, coaches, and accompanists was used.

Another aspect of this inquiry involved analysis of the music itself. Of particular interest was the stylistic analysis of a selection of Milhaud's songs, chosen because of the pedagogical problems that individual songs present and because of their musical and textual interest.

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then, are removed from the actual event. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1985) describe secondary sources by noting that "the mind of a nonobserver . . . comes between the event and the user of the record" (p. 332). In the case of musical scores, the distinction between primary and secondary sources is not always clearly defined. Depending upon the amount of control the composer exercised over the publication of his works, the printed music might be either a primary or a secondary source.

### Addressing the Purposes of the Study

Methods of research varied to meet the needs of each purpose presented in Chapter I. As stated above, historical research methods (i.e., the examination of primary and secondary sources) were used. Musicological research methods resemble historical methods in their use of primary and secondary sources, but differ in that they include the examination of musical artifacts. In this case, the scores of Milhaud's songs were the musical artifacts under consideration.

In addition, sample survey research techniques were employed in the distribution of a questionnaire to selected college voice teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists.

Specifically, the purposes of the study were addressed as follows:

Purpose 1: To gather and to present to the musical community in general various insights of performers and teachers into the songs of Darius Milhaud.

Fulfilling this purpose required eliciting from selected practitioners, by means of a questionnaire, their observations on the songs of Darius Milhaud and their comments on the pedagogical, aesthetic, and technical problems posed by this literature.

Purpose 2: To serve as a source of pedagogical support and of information for the use of studio teachers by providing a performer/teacher's analysis of selected songs.

Addressing this purpose required examination of the music itself and of writings about the music, with particular emphasis on those qualities which are peculiarly French and some which are distinctly twentieth-century in aesthetic and technical conception.<sup>28</sup> Analytical considerations included Milhaud's compositional practice in general and the way it illuminates the texts of selected songs as well as documents which place individual songs in historical perspective.

Purpose 3: To determine what supplementary materials voice teachers, coaches, and accompanists would find helpful in teaching Milhaud's solo songs.

Suggestions for supplementary materials were drawn from two sources: (1) the responses of teachers, coaches, and accompanists to the question "What materials would help you to use the songs of Milhaud in your teaching or performance

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<sup>28</sup>Of the four major languages which form the core of college voice study, French is normally the last presented, partly because of the difficulty of the language itself, and partly because of the technical and conceptual difficulty of the vocal literature. Many writers and teachers believe that, for an English-speaking person, the German world of ideas is easier to penetrate than the French (Schjøtz, 1970, p. 93). Certainly, the musical realizations of those two worlds of ideas are vastly different. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

or both?" (Item 20 on the questionnaire); and (2) the researcher's own findings.

Purpose 4: To contribute to current musicological research on Darius Milhaud, with particular emphasis on his solo songs.

Addressing this purpose required an examination of writings by and about Darius Milhaud, as well as the analysis of a selected group of songs. Substantial information on Milhaud's songs is lacking now, for the songs are rarely discussed in detail in any given source. However, through the use of standard library sources, the resources of the Mills College Milhaud Archive, and the analysis of selected songs, the researcher drew together information concerning this body of vocal literature, making the information more accessible to teachers in college voice studios.

#### Addressing the Research Questions

Addressing the research questions also required a combination of historical research and other data gathering procedures.

Research Question 1 (Purpose 1): With which of the solo songs of Milhaud are teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists familiar?

Research Question 2 (Purpose 1): Which of the solo songs of Milhaud are most often performed or assigned by teachers, coaches, and accompanists?

Research Question 3 (Purpose 1): What insights into the technical and aesthetic problems of Milhaud's songs do teachers, coaches, and accompanists offer?

Answers to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 (Purpose 1) were pursued by means of a questionnaire distributed to studio teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists who work with college voice students. Items on the questionnaire were designed to elicit from respondents information on each of these research questions.

Research Question 1 (Purpose 2): Which of Milhaud's songs, if any, might be introduced to college voice students?

In order to suggest songs useful for introducing Darius Milhaud's vocal literature to college voice students, the researcher considered the needs of the college voice students and the sequence in which those needs are addressed in applied music study.<sup>29</sup> The comments of teachers, coaches, and accompanists from the questionnaires, the researcher's experience as a teacher/performer, and the conventions of college voice study were used to determine,

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<sup>29</sup>Although it is not the purpose of this research to document those needs, they are generally understood by voice teachers to include introduction to "standard repertoire"; introduction to languages (usually Italian, then German, and only later French); and development of memory skills, stage presence, and interpretation. All of this is interspersed with the completely technical considerations of vocal production, which include voice placement, support, and breath control. This very systematic, structured approach is outlined in Van A. Christy, Expressive Singing, a pedagogical guide commonly used by college studio voice teachers.

from the number selected for examination, those songs of Milhaud which would seem appropriate for introducing college students to the works of this prolific twentieth-century composer.

Research Question 2 (Purpose 2): What are the musical characteristics of the songs selected for analysis?

Answering this question required determining the general characteristics of the French art song by means of a survey of authoritative writings on French music, deriving the characteristics of Milhaud's art songs by means of song analysis, and comparing the two. The selection of songs for the examination was large enough to be representative but small enough to allow the possibility of meaningful analytical research.

Research Question 3 (Purpose 2): What potential pedagogical problems are evident in the songs selected for analysis?

The identification of pedagogical problems derived from two sources: (a) responses to the questionnaire and (b) the researcher's experience as a performer and teacher.

Research Question (Purpose 3): What materials do teachers, coaches, and accompanists suggest as being potentially helpful in the study of Milhaud's solo songs?

The identification of materials useful in the study of Milhaud's songs was drawn from the responses to an item in the questionnaire eliciting suggestions from teachers, coaches, and accompanists.

Research Question 1 (Purpose 4): What social and artistic influences led to Milhaud's personal compositional style?

Research Question 2 (Purpose 4): What insights does critical commentary offer on the solo songs of Darius Milhaud?

The literature review served to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 (Purpose 4). The composer's own writings and interviews were of primary concern in determining the influences that led to his style. The examination of critical analyses, reviews, and other writings about his work led to the discussion of the insights which critical commentary offers on Milhaud's songs.

#### Musicological/Historical Research Methods

As stated above, standard musicological and historical research procedures were used, including the consultation of secondary sources (in this case, chiefly biographical and critical in nature), the examination of primary sources (Milhaud's articles, autobiography, and published interviews), and analysis of the musical scores and the texts.

#### Musical Analysis

Data from the analyses of the songs and related musicological research were organized as appropriate for each song, including some or all of the following:

1. Preliminary overview of the song.
2. Historical origin and background of the song.
3. Form of the song.
4. The text of the song (including prosody).
5. Musical features of the accompaniment.
6. Pedagogical problems inherent in the song. These include
  - a. problems of hearing (i.e., problems in developing the performer's internal pitch sense);
  - b. problems of interpretation (text or music, or both);
  - c. problems of vocal production; and
  - d. problems of ensemble (the performing relationship between singer and accompanist).

### The Questionnaire

It was necessary to supplement the historical and musicological research with inquiry into educational procedures in established voice studios, as they relate to the teaching of Darius Milhaud's solo songs. For this purpose, a questionnaire addressed to teachers, coaches, and accompanists in college voice studios was developed.

Questions concerned

1. degree programs offered by the respondents' institutions;
2. extent of involvement in the teaching and performance of twentieth-century vocal music;



3. levels of voice students taught (undergraduate, graduate; beginning, advanced);
4. familiarity with Milhaud's songs;
5. problems in performing or teaching which those respondents familiar with Milhaud's songs perceive in the songs; and
6. information/materials which respondents would find helpful in incorporating Milhaud's songs into the studio curriculum.

The questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experienced practitioners in the field of vocal music, representing teachers, coaches, and accompanists, for verification of content.

#### Identification of Respondents

The questionnaire was distributed at the South Central Region (states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) and Arkansas state meetings of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS).<sup>30</sup> In addition, teachers, coaches, and accompanists in several colleges and

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<sup>30</sup>The 23rd edition (1989) of the Encyclopedia of Associations describes the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) as a professional society of vocal music teachers, with a national membership of 4700. Activities of NATS include encouraging and conducting research on scientific vocal projects, conducting workshops for the extension of vocal education and the improvement of teaching skills, conducting surveys of conditions affecting vocal music teachers, and providing edited lists of new songs, text translations, and other materials (entry number 7855).

universities selected from the College Music Society's<sup>31</sup> Directory of Music Faculties in Colleges and Universities, U.S. and Canada, 1986-88 were asked to participate in a sample survey. Institutions were selected from across the United States. These were four-year institutions which are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and which offer degrees in vocal performance or voice instruction as a supporting course for non-performance degrees (Music Education, for example). Some of the institutions offer graduate degrees.

Questionnaires were distributed to the entire population of teachers, coaches, and accompanists attending regional and state NATS meetings. They were mailed only to those instructors whose positions are described by code 32 (Voice Instruction) and code 37f (Accompanying) in the College Music Society's Directory of Music Faculties in Colleges and Universities, U.S. and Canada, 1986-88. (There is no separate code for Coaching.)

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<sup>31</sup>The 23rd edition of the Encyclopedia of Associations describes the College Music Society (CMS) as a professional society of teachers of music in institutions of higher education, with a national membership of 5750. The purpose of the CMS is to gather, consider, and disseminate ideas on the philosophy and practice of music in colleges and universities (entry number 7841).

### Analysis of Data

Data from the questionnaire were analyzed to determine current practice regarding the songs of Milhaud and to identify the respondents' opinions of the songs as literature and their concerns about the songs as study materials. In addition, respondents' suggestions regarding useful information/study materials were noted, along with their suggestions for the songs' use in the studio curriculum.

### Summary of Research Methods

This consideration of the solo songs of Darius Milhaud as possible material for the college voice studio required a blending of musicological/historical inquiry and the collection of data on current pedagogical practice in college voice studios. Methods varied as appropriate for each stated purpose and research question.

## CHAPTER IV RESULTS OF A SAMPLE SURVEY

### Introduction

The researcher's belief that the songs of Darius Milhaud might be infrequently used in the college voice studio was based on the lack of commercially available scores and recordings and on the general lack of information available about the songs in standard references. In order to verify this belief, a questionnaire was devised and distributed to 150 teachers, accompanists, and coaches in college voice studios across the country. The purpose of the questionnaire was not only to determine how widespread the use of these songs might be, but also to supplement the historical and musicological research with inquiry into the actual teaching of the songs.

Although it is perhaps common to associate the greatest role in the preparation of college voice students with the voice teacher, coaches and accompanists are also extremely important in the process. It is not the purpose of this study to document the role of the accompanist or coach/accompanist in the performance of vocal literature.

It is, however, important to note that, far from simply providing a background against which the singer performs, the accompanist is a full partner in the performance. Adler (1965) refers correctly to the soloist and accompanists as a "team," and Gerald Moore writes about the partnership of the singer and the accompanist in Am I Too Loud?:

How inspiring for the singer when rehearsing to feel that his partner at the piano has given the song as much study as he, knows the poem, is aware of that awkward corner just approaching, anticipates with him--not responding after--to this inflexion and that. (p. 191)

This attitude is not peculiar to the twentieth century, but neither has it prevailed throughout the history of solo singing. That this is so may be inferred from Franz Schubert's observation, "The manner and way in which Vogl sings and I accompany, in which at such a moment we seem to be one, is something quite new to these people" (Schiøtz, 1970, p. 158).

Modern writings on the art of accompanying and coaching, those of Conraad Bos, Gerald Moore, and Kurt Adler, for example, stress the importance of the accompanist's and coach's roles in the preparation and performance of song literature and emphasize the rigorous education essential for each, which includes comprehensive study of vocal literature and languages. Hence, even though they may not be directly involved in choosing the material

which a young singer studies, they certainly affect the results of that choice. For this reason, they were included among those who were asked to participate in the survey.

The questionnaire, which appears in the Appendix, was submitted to a panel of five experienced practitioners in the areas of voice teaching, accompanying, and coaching for verification of content and was revised according to their recommendation before distribution. Questions were included which would elicit information about the respondent and his or her institution as well as specific information about the use of Milhaud's songs in the voice studio.

Questions concerned (a) the degree programs offered by the respondents' institutions, (b) the extent of involvement in the teaching and performance of twentieth century vocal music, (c) the levels of voice students taught by the respondents (undergraduate, graduate), (d) the respondents' familiarity with Milhaud's songs, and (e) the problems in performing or teaching which those respondents familiar with Milhaud's songs perceived in the songs. The questionnaire also included an opportunity for respondents to suggest information and materials which they would find helpful in incorporating Milhaud's songs into the studio curriculum and, finally, an opportunity for respondents to include comments or observations not covered elsewhere among the questions.

## Results

### Description of Respondents and Their Institutions

Of 150 questionnaires distributed, 73, or 48.7% were completed and returned. Two more were returned with letters attached which provided some information but which did not directly respond to items on the questionnaire. An additional eight were returned without response due to various factors beyond the control of either the researcher or the respondents.<sup>32</sup> Sixty-two, or 85%, of respondents were voice teachers, and the remaining 15% identified themselves as accompanists or vocal coaches or both (Item 1).<sup>33</sup> Eighty-nine percent of respondents teach in universities, with 33 respondents working in university schools or colleges of music and 32 in departments of music. Three teach in junior or community colleges, one in a college department of music. There were, in addition, four teachers with private studios and two who said they have

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<sup>32</sup>One addressee was deceased, and seven were no longer located at the addresses given in the CMS Directory.

<sup>33</sup>Respondents were not asked to identify themselves, and so in most cases, the gender of the respondent is not known. Some people who asked for copies of the abstract, however, identified themselves on the questionnaire rather than on a separate sheet as requested, evidently seeing no need for secrecy. In these cases, it is possible to refer to the respondent by the appropriate personal pronoun. This accounts for the use of either he or she or of a single pronoun in references to respondents.

private studios in addition to their university work (Item 2). Sixty-six respondents reported teaching in institutions which offer an undergraduate degree in performance, 58 in those which offer graduate study in voice (Items 4 and 5).

By far, the major musical emphasis of those institutions represented was Music Education, with performance listed second (Item 3). A third group listed Music Education and performance together as the major emphasis. Areas least cited were research (cited five times, for 6.8% of the total), research in combination with performance (four, or 5.4%), and Music Theory and Composition (one, or .14%).

#### Levels of Voice Students Taught

Respondents reported teaching, coaching, or accompanying a total of 687 undergraduates, 219 of whom were performance majors, and 253 graduate students, of whom 212 were performance majors (Items 7 and 8).

#### Involvement in Teaching Twentieth-Century Music

A plurality of respondents said that all the programs of their institutions, taken together, as well as their own individual programs, were moderately involved in the performance and teaching of twentieth-century music (Items 6 and 9). Teachers were asked to list twentieth-century



composers represented on their own programs within the last five years. The names of 175 composers appeared on their combined lists. In addition, several said they performed the works of colleagues, some of whom were named on the list of composers; others were not identified by name.

Similarly, teachers were asked to list the names of twentieth-century composers whose works they regularly assign to students. One hundred thirty composers were listed in this category. In addition, teachers noted that students sometimes perform the works of student composers.

Most of the twentieth-century composers who appeared on performance lists for teachers as well as for students were English or American. Some teachers said they consciously chose to use English language material in order to cut down on the complexity of the task of learning works which often have unusual technical problems anyway. (The fact that there are simply more works by American composers published now than in earlier eras may have contributed to the use of American works as well.)

One respondent wondered why there was concern about twentieth-century literature at all, noting that we are rapidly approaching the twenty-first century and that the inclusion of this century's music in the repertoire of college voice students should be taken for granted. The comments of other teachers suggest, however, that the

inclusion of this literature certainly cannot be assumed, and furthermore that it poses problems to which they give very serious consideration. Supplementary comments to Items 6 and 9 shed some light on the practice of assigning twentieth-century literature to voice students. Several teachers said that they assign such literature when the student seems ready for it, or when it "fits" the student. One teacher wrote, "We do not set out as a goal to use twentieth-century music. In the studio we use it when it is appropriate and [when it] suits the needs and capabilities of the students. We do have a course in contemporary music." Another wrote, "I wish we were more involved in twentieth-century literature. However, the musical background of our student body poses definite limitations and makes much of such literature almost inaccessible."

One teacher commented specifically on the repertoire for beginning voice students. "I usually have so many freshmen that I start them off on early 17th and 18th century Italian songs and arias. When I do assign twentieth-century composers, these are usually the ones: Copland, Poulenc, Floyd, Trimble, Arnold Cooke, Barber." The same teacher wrote that the choice of literature was further influenced by considerations of the teacher's own piano (accompanying) skills.

Some noted that they try to include some twentieth-century literature in every student's repertoire, and one wrote emphatically about prerequisites to twentieth-century vocal literature in general, and to twentieth-century French literature in particular:

I feel my own performance can be more serving of new music, and [I] have used my recitals to introduce unusual music and keep interest in repertoire for the students who MUST explore the vast traditional repertoire FIRST. NO undergraduate should sing 20th century French before a grounding in Gounod and early Fauré - PLUS - thorough knowledge of French poetry. Milhaud, Satie, Messaien are all WHIPPED CREAM to stand upon something primary.

#### Familiarity with Milhaud's Songs

There were nine questions which solicited information about the songs of Milhaud and a tenth question (Item 21) which asked respondents to comment further if they wished, especially on the subject of comparisons between Milhaud's works and those of other twentieth-century composers. Five of the questions (Items 13, 14, 15, 16, and 19) asked for the observations and critical or evaluative comments of teachers, accompanists and coaches. An analysis of those comments appears below. Three of the questions (Items 10, 11, and 12) asked about the respondents' familiarity with Milhaud's songs and requested a listing of the songs with which they were merely familiar, another list of those which

they had performed themselves, and a third containing the titles of those which they had assigned to students. The responses are summarized below. One question (Item 20) asked teachers to suggest materials which would be helpful in the teaching or performance of Milhaud's songs.

Only 36 of the respondents were familiar with any of Milhaud's solo songs. Collectively, they were familiar with works catalogued under 19 different opus numbers (less than a third of his total output). The cycle entitled Chansons de Ronsard was most frequently listed as a familiar work, followed at a distance by the famous Catalogue de fleurs and the Poèmes juifs.

Eight of the 19 works which were familiar had been performed by a total of 15 respondents. The eight opus numbers which have been performed represent one-eighth of Milhaud's total output in the area of the solo song. The Chansons de Ronsard were the most frequently performed songs (listed by three respondents), followed by Poèmes juifs, Chants populaires hébraïque, and Deux petits airs de Stephane Mallarmé (each of which were listed by two respondents).

More teachers had assigned works by Milhaud to their students than had performed the works themselves. Twenty-four reported having taught eight works to their students.

Once again, the Chansons de Ronsard was by far the work most frequently assigned.

One respondent said that he or she was familiar with all of the songs and had assigned "almost all" of them to students. Another reported being familiar with "most of them." Since not all of the songs are published, it seems unlikely that a respondent would be familiar with all of them or would have assigned most of them to students. These respondents may not have realized that many of the songs remain unpublished.<sup>34</sup>

Question number 13 asked at what level of advancement students should be introduced to the songs of Milhaud. Fifteen teachers, coaches, and accompanists said they had too little knowledge of this literature to respond. It is interesting to note that, although only about half of the responding teachers, accompanists, and coaches were familiar with any of the works of Milhaud, and although only approximately one-fifth of them had actually performed some of the songs themselves, the majority of those who responded to this question had the impression that the songs are difficult and should be assigned to upper level

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<sup>34</sup>The catalog prepared by Madame Milhaud from the composer's notebooks and revised by Jane Galante shows a total of 25 unpublished works for voice and piano, including one youthful work with a duplicate opus number. Of these, three manuscripts have been lost. See Galante, 1988, pp. 338-346.

undergraduates (often described as advanced or precocious) or to graduate students. The fact that the songs are, for the most part, in French is certainly one contributing factor in the decision concerning the best level at which to assign them, since many undergraduates do not work on French literature until the junior or senior year. A few respondents said that the assignment of material depends entirely upon the individual student's level of achievement, and one noted that there are songs by Milhaud which might be assigned as early as the sophomore year, although he did not identify which ones.

Question 19 asked that respondents rate the importance of the songs of Milhaud in comparison to twentieth-century vocal literature as a whole. Five options were given, ranging from one to five, "not at all important" (1) to "extremely important" (5). Sixteen people either said that they didn't know enough to judge or gave no response. Of the 56 who responded, exactly half rated Milhaud's songs at the second level, "somewhat important," and another 22 called them moderately important. Some people who commented said that, on the strength of his reputation as a composer, they were willing to believe that his vocal literature was at least somewhat important, and that the songs of any reputable composer need to be considered. One accompanist wrote, "Though I am not that familiar with Milhaud's vocal

works, his instrumental works are certainly worthy of performance. Why shouldn't the vocal ones be a larger part of song repertoire?" No one described the songs as "extremely important"; and only one person considered them "not at all important."

#### Problems in Performing or Teaching the Songs of Milhaud

Participants in the survey were asked to describe any problems they had encountered in preparation and performance of Milhaud's songs, either as performer or as teacher (Items 14 and 16). Respondents were instructed that the term "problems" should be understood to include both problems of technique and problems of musical interpretation. In Question 14, respondents were also asked to comment on whether or not they found Milhaud's writing idiomatic for the voice and piano.

Twenty-eight people wrote responses to Question 14, which dealt with problems they themselves had encountered as performers. Sixteen responses had to do specifically with the question of idiomatic writing: Respondents were almost evenly divided on the issue. Eight wrote that Milhaud's writing for voice and piano is idiomatic, with some commenting that he writes well for the voice, with "good melodic content, good piano." The group who found the songs with which they were familiar to be non-idiomatic tended to

give explanations for their conclusion. Some of their comments appear below:

The particular group I am familiar with uses the voice somewhat instrumentally and percussively, creating some difficulties with breathing and register changes.

Some songs are not innately musical--was difficult to tie lines together, achieve continuity.

The angularity of line must be thought of in terms of legato (I usually take this approach). The text must be clear and understood by the audience; this is sometimes difficult in [view] of the construction of the piece.

I find it pianistic (except Ronsard). Problems are finding contrast in repetitive forms and horrid prosody.

One response was ambiguous. The respondent wrote, "Although I enjoyed doing L'amour chante, I do not feel that I understood the melodic concept of the later Milhaud style. Much melodic writing seems arbitrary, forced, mechanical. I am ready to acknowledge this as my failing, not his." Further on, however, the writer commented, "I always found the vocal writing idiomatic, especially where the range is limited, as it usually is."

The piano accompaniments to some of the songs are transcriptions of orchestral accompaniments. One respondent noted that the transcriptions were sometimes awkward and therefore difficult to manage.

There were 23 written comments in response to Question 16, which dealt with problems encountered while teaching the



songs. Two teachers said their students had had no particular difficulties with the songs they chose. Others discussed the technical and interpretive problems they found while teaching these songs. These fell into seven categories and included problems of tessitura, rhythmic structure, melodic structure, ensemble, general readiness of the student for the works (including both technical and "cultural" preparation), ensemble, interpretation, and language facility.

Teachers spoke of rhythmic "intricacies" without identifying particular problems such as cross-rhythms or unusual divisions of the beat. Chromaticism and the presence of many altered notes were cited as melodic problems. The nature of the melodic line itself, and not just of individual notes within the line, was also commented upon: "[T]he melodic line often is somewhat 'square' and must be well phrased."

Not surprisingly, respondents warned that students should have a well-founded musicianship and good technical preparation before attempting these songs. (This caveat applied to the accompanists as well as to the singers. Some teachers noted that the students should have a good technique and an accompanist who could handle the piano parts.) The high tessitura of the Ronsard songs and the placement of vowels in high passages was cited as a

technical problem to be overcome. Nonetheless, many said that, with a good technique, the songs which they had taught were not particularly difficult as far as notes were concerned. Several comments, however, suggest that the songs were not always easy to deal with interpretively. Many responses suggested that at least part of the problem of interpretation had to do with the language of the songs. French diction and the understanding of the text posed problems for some students. Ensemble, for some, was a problem. "These songs also need careful preparation with the accompanist, who is really another singer in performing them, and should feel every nuance the singer feels," wrote one teacher, echoing Gerald Moore's frequent observation on the subject.

#### Appealing and Unappealing Qualities of the Songs

In Question 15, teachers, coaches, and accompanists were asked to describe the appealing features of the songs or, if they had rejected the songs for performance or teaching or both, to explain why they had rejected them.

Few respondents indicated a conscious choice to reject the songs: The most frequent reason for not including Milhaud's songs in performance or teaching repertoires was simple lack of familiarity with the material. Only two people wrote that they were not attracted to them. Three

respondents compared Milhaud's songs unfavorably with those of Francis Poulenc and Erik Satie. "[Milhaud's songs] tend to possess less of a singing line than these. . . . They seem to be more instrumental in nature," one wrote. One described Poulenc as a "much finer vocal composer," and another said, "Poulenc does it better."

The qualities listed as appealing to respondents fell easily into four categories. By far, the most appealing part of the songs was the texts. Some cited the quality of the texts in general, others liked the humor in some of the texts, and others, who described themselves as partial to French vocal literature anyway, were particularly drawn to Milhaud's choice of French texts.

The next largest category of appealing qualities had to do with the craft with which the pieces were constructed. Some respondents referred to "good craftsmanship," others simply described the songs as "good music, well written."

Singers who had performed the Ronsard songs naturally found the virtuosic quality of the cycle appealing, and this challenging aspect of the songs formed a third category of qualities which respondents liked.

Finally, some respondents considered the songs they knew appealing for the very reason that they are not familiar to most singers and concert-goers. One singer summarized the responses in this category: "well written;

delightful additions to recital programs; not among the 'common' literature; worth the work of preparing them, because they are most frequently well-received."

### Helpful Information or Materials

Sixty-five people responded to Question 20 ("What materials would help you to use the songs of Milhaud in your teaching or performance or both?"). Since some gave more than one suggestion, there were 105 responses, which fell in 12 categories of materials or information. The greatest needs which respondents identified were complete or annotated repertoire lists (36 responses) and recordings (31 responses). Other needs included readings and discussions of French poetry, literal translations, scores that are easier and less costly to acquire, and collections of selected songs. Some teachers said that they themselves felt the need for more training in the theory of twentieth-century music, and one thought that theoretical analyses of the songs would be helpful.

### Additional Information

In a final question, respondents were encouraged to comment further, if they had observations which they thought were not covered in any of the preceding questions. These responses most often took the form of summary statements,

and frequently expressed the respondents' regret at not knowing more of Milhaud's songs or their pleasure at having had them called to their attention. They also revealed some of the difficulties inherent in attempting to use Milhaud's songs in the college voice studio.

A teacher wrote that Milhaud's songs are not "as 'user-friendly' to the ear as some other twentieth-century works are." One reason they seem more forbidding may be that they are heard so rarely. Not only are they performed infrequently, but they are also difficult to obtain on recordings. "The works of Milhaud are not as widely recorded as, perhaps, Poulenc. It is difficult to judge the merit of works not heard frequently or about which not much has been written concerning performance practice," wrote another teacher.

Keeping up with material that is considered standard repertoire is in itself a formidable task for a voice teacher or coach, without branching out into more "unusual" literature. If that non-standard literature happens to be French, then the difficulty seems to be compounded. One singer expressed the obligation a teacher feels to improve constantly his or her own teaching or performing repertoire. "The songs of Poulenc and Ravel, for example, are considered more standard literature, and I don't know them well enough. And my forays into twentieth-century French literature are

limited in deference to other areas. Count the twentieth-century French literature at NATS--slim pickings."

The participants who expressed some reservations about Milhaud's songs often said their reservations were based more on unfamiliarity than on actual knowledge of the literature. One respondent expressed the attitude of several who, based on minimal knowledge of Milhaud's composition in general or of the songs in particular, were skeptical, but who were willing to be convinced otherwise. "Milhaud is not one of my favorite composers. If I were more intimately familiar with his solo vocal works, I might feel otherwise, I have . . . colleagues who have worked on some of his songs and really enjoyed them."

Another respondent had heard the works only infrequently, but was nonetheless impressed with them. "I have found his compositions to be very esoteric and sophisticated, hence, a tribute to the singer's imagination and musicality."

CHAPTER V  
DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SONGS

Introduction

At this point it is appropriate to formulate a musically and pedagogically sound approach to the use of the solo songs of Milhaud in the college voice studio. In the current chapter several issues which bear on this enterprise will be discussed. These issues include the general nature of musical analysis, and the question of which type of analysis will best serve the purposes of the present study; the phenomenon of neglected literature, and the uses of such literature in the voice curriculum; the general nature and background of the French art song, the *mélodie* which nourished Milhaud's own compositional efforts; and the question of languages and translations.

Following this discussion, sample analyses of eight solo songs by Milhaud will be presented. These analyses are offered both for their intrinsic musical interest, and as models for a suggested pedagogical procedure.

### Music Analysis

The purpose of analysis is not merely to say something that is true about a piece of music--one could make any number of true but trivial statements about any work of art--but to illuminate the music, to expose for some specific purpose features which are not immediately apparent. Different types of analysis are used to fulfill different purposes. For example, musicians distinguish between harmonic analysis, formal analysis, and what is often called a "performer's analysis." A harmonic (chord by chord) analysis of a song offers one type of information which may or may not be helpful in the performance or teaching of the song. Likewise, an analysis of the song's form, while interesting, may not yield any useful information about the relationship between the text and its setting. A performer's analysis, on the other hand, may be suggestive but lack the objective verifiability of a harmonic or formal analysis.

This study is concerned mainly with conditions of performance and performance pedagogy. Consequently, attention is directed primarily to uses which a performer can make of analysis. On the other hand, even the most poetic, inspired insights rest upon a bedrock of verifiable data. Harmonic and formal analysis can provide some of that data. Consequently, an ad hoc combination of harmonic,



formal, and performer's analyses would seem most useful for this study.

Just as there are many types of analysis, there are many views of analysis as an aid to performance. Some writers warn of the "dangers" of the application of pure intelligence to art. Collaer writes,

The exercise of pure intelligence in art, or adherence to intellectual values, makes the artist lose contact with real life. The interior void which results is masked by good taste. When an artist cuts himself off from the warm sources of life, he narrows his horizon. . . . This is the complexity of lyric artists. All the components of a composition, each selected by an act of the intelligence, are unified by a superior form of intelligence, that of the heart. (1955/1961 pp. 240-241)

Presumably, the intelligence of the heart of which Collaer speaks is not to be confused with sentimentality. Collaer goes so far as to speak of the "dangerous route of analysis," one in which the music and its affective aspects are subsumed in its purely theoretical aspects. "Since 1910," he writes, "lyric composition has been somewhat discredited. People have been exclusively concerned with form and construction. The supreme compliment an artist can be paid is to be called intelligent" (1955/1961, p. 239).

The reader must not be too quick to conclude that, for Collaer and others, intelligence had become an attribute to be avoided. On the contrary, the composers of Milhaud's early association expected intelligent handling of music not

only by themselves but by their audiences as well. So important was the intelligence of the audience that Milhaud said he firmly believed that the fate of contemporary music lay in the ears of the listeners, listeners who were willing to make an effort to understand the "new" music before they judged it. "I have long felt that the future of music lies in the ears and the attitudes of the hearers. The composers can take care of themselves" (Milhaud 1949, p. 58). The point Collaer makes is that, although the intelligence "could act abstractly, . . . to allow the emotions which have given it life to function would in no way detract from its luster or its lucidity" (1955/1961, p. 239).

Milhaud went on record as opposing analysis. In an article entitled "A Musical Homage to Darius Milhaud," Robert Commanday reports that a usually diplomatic Milhaud was once more outspoken, this time in the matter of program notes and analysis. "What I don't like is the habit of always wanting to explain or make an analysis. Music is made to be heard and not to be cut into pieces" (1971a, p. 33). Milhaud goes on to describe a performance of Pierre Boulez's Visages Nuptiales before which Boulez explained the piece for an hour. The ensuing performance lasted only fifteen minutes. "That bored me. For the public, analyses are nothing. That's why I never accept to write program notes . . . , only the history of the piece, how and why it

was written. But all those little details on the music, I think it's stupid!" (Commanday, 1971a, p. 33).

Two days later, Commanday commented that Milhaud's attitude reflected an ideal world. Most audiences, however, are not ideal, and even the most sophisticated of audiences often appreciates a few guidelines. Commanday suspected that what Milhaud really objected to is what he saw as an implied condescension toward the audience in the providing of notes. (Milhaud may have been overestimating the audience: For all their interest in music, twentieth-century audiences are not made up entirely of aristocrats or highly skilled and knowledgeable amateurs. Emmons and Sonntag describe the modern audience in their Art of the Song Recital. It comprises, they say, three types of individuals: (1) the enthusiast, who is knowledgeable about music and who is highly motivated to "investigate and enjoy any new music, whether contemporary or from the past"; (2) the connoisseur, who, they say, "hastens to admire chic music, which is in vogue and pleases the prevailing taste"; and (3) the "remaining individual, typical of the majority, who accepts his standards and convictions second-hand" (1979, p. 2).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>The state of the modern audience is no accident, according to Emmons and Sonntag, who trace the history of the song recital and its adherents in their excellent book, The Art of the Song Recital. While in some ways the modern audience enjoys a broader base than in earlier eras, in

It is clear that, on occasion, at least, Milhaud believed he had been harmed by uninformed analyses, by critics who were quicker to judge than to listen.

It is curious how people go on believing that the composer knows less about what he is doing than those who judge him. I have heard it said that my style has changed. Well! I began by writing what I felt, and have kept on doing just that. What has changed, perhaps, is the ear of the listeners. The audacities of 1920 seem quite natural in 1940. After listening to a work, or a style, for twenty years, people get used to it. Then they think the music has changed. Audiences--and especially critics--could bring about this "change" in less than two decades if they gave themselves the chance of hearing a new work several times before forming an opinion about it. (1949, p. 58)

He goes on to make his point by telling of the critic who, after hearing a new piece for the third time, thought that it had been cut (according to his unsolicited instructions

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others it is declining. Education, of course, plays a major role in the development of interest in the arts. The authors cite the chilling results of the 1971-72 survey by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The large number of nonresponses to NAEP's request for information seems to suggest that there were many school districts in which no instruction in music was offered at all. "Of those who responded, only 23% of upper grade schools (a smaller percentage for lower grades) had music taught by specialists." In 30% of responding schools, music was taught by classroom teachers, who were often musically illiterate. It seems unlikely that these statistics will have changed significantly in the intervening 17 years.

Emmons and Sonntag close their discussion with a paraphrase of Alan Buechner's article on the NAEP in the Fall, 1977 College Music Symposium. The fact that we do not know who will ultimately decide to participate in the arts in any capacity does not excuse public schools from giving all students the tools with which to make their own decisions about the arts.

to the composer), when in fact it was exactly the same piece he had heard all along.

Understanding a composition may also occur on two levels. One level is concerned with all of the issues of construction--text, harmonic language, rhythmic language, and so on. Another, less accessible, level is concerned with what motivated the composer to write as he did. The musician may approach that level through knowing the composer's style so well that the issue of motivation is not such a mystery, or through hearing or reading what the composer himself had to say about the compositional process involved in a given piece. In the twentieth century, when each of a composer's works may represent a new approach to the creative problem, knowing his style may not be possible. And if, as in the case of Milhaud, he chooses to say little about what motivated his work, the musician is left to his own devices and to depending upon the work of other analysts for helpful information.

Milhaud alludes to his own "inner processes" in the passage about Catalogue de fleurs and Les Machines agricoles quoted in Chapter II. There he speaks of the time and the "agonizing passion that goes into the process of creation." Can anyone outside the composer himself possibly understand this? Probably not, unless the composer has left a record. Although Milhaud said very little about his own works, he

evidently valued the work that Collaer did with his compositions. "He wrote a very good book on Stravinsky and one on myself, containing very shrewd analyses of my work" (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 127).

It is, perhaps, not essential to know exactly what the composer had in mind in order to appreciate one of his compositions. In his preface to Stravinsky's Poetics of Music, Milhaud wrote,

To know a work--to feel it, to love it--does not necessarily require a knowledge of the inner processes that activate its creator. But when he himself takes the trouble to share with us this inner work, following its various stages, we can then gauge how important such a revelation can be when it is based upon absolute sincerity and intellectual integrity. (1947, p. ix)

What the musician can seek to know about a composition, then, is what he himself can discover: the relationship of the language to the setting, the historical background of the work, technical aspects of construction which might either help or hinder mastery of the material, and so on. It is these questions which the following analyses seek to address.

### The Study of Literature

Analysis is of little use without a knowledge of literature. Although courses in vocal literature may be offered in degree programs with an emphasis on vocal

performance, it is the studio teacher who is primarily responsible for the introduction of vocal literature. This occurs on two levels in the college voice studio. On one level, most voice teachers attempt to make the voice student aware of a wide variety of literature, only a small part of which may be suitable for the student to perform. At this level, the student may be directed to listen to particular compositions, perhaps in conjunction with the study of scores. On another level, the student is introduced to literature by preparing the literature for performance. The first level provides breadth and background; the second provides painstaking command of detail and technique. Ideally, the first level is rich in content and is therefore able to inform performance. That is, ideally, a singer will know more of the works of a given composer than the song which he or she may be planning to perform.

In The Art of Accompanying and Coaching, Kurt Adler (1965) gives some good advice to vocal coaches on the subject of breadth of knowledge of vocal literature. The advice is well heeded by singers as well:

A good song coach must not only understand the poem but should know a goodly number of other poems by the same author, giving him better insight into the poet's style. To know one poem of Verlaine, for instance, is only confusing. But if you read his cycle of poems, a new poetic world will open up for you and you will suddenly understand the poem of the song which you are coaching. The same holds true for the music of a song. If you knew but one song by Brahms its

meaning might remain a mystery. Only by knowing Brahms' other songs and a good deal of orchestral and chamber music will you be able to understand fully the meaning of a particular song.

This leads me back to what I said . . . about the cultural background of coach and accompanist. The deeper and better founded it is, the better will his work turn out to be. (pp. 219-220)

A well-founded cultural background is no less essential for the singer. Christy (1968) advises students to remember that "a thorough musical foundation, languages, and general culture are indispensable," and furthermore that intelligence and diligence, among other qualities, are essential for the serious student of singing (p. 16).

#### Neglected Literature: Attitudes toward the Unfamiliar

"Neglected literature" may be an entirely twentieth-century phenomenon. In sharp contrast to times past, when the audience (and, indeed, the performers) knew what to expect because the composer was bound by certain rather strict musical conventions, today's performers and listeners often have no idea what to expect. Often twentieth-century music displays no consistently identifiable traits<sup>36</sup>; each

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<sup>36</sup>"What are the characteristics of contemporary music? I have no idea! They depend, not on a given plan or system, but on the nature, the gifts, and the craftsmanship of the person who writes. Every composer has his own form of expression" (Milhaud, 1949, p. 9).



piece may become an adventure in composition, so that a composer's entire oeuvre may yield no coherent pattern of development or style. This may be less true of vocal literature than of other genres, but it is still seen as a problem by many writers; some even consider that a state of "war" exists between performers and composers.

Samuel Lipman (1979) describes the problem, as he sees it, in a chapter entitled "The Performer's Predicament" in his Music after Modernism:

[T]here is now, to a historically unparalleled extent, no relationship between the music famous artists perform and the music serious composers are writing. The evidence from concert programs and the box office is ubiquitous. A performer's career can no longer be advanced, but rather only harmed, by an association with new music. Such new music as is programmed is played either by musicians at the second level of public renown or--and then only occasionally--by stars making a quick descent into charity. No matter by whom it is performed, the new music is hastily learned and quickly forgotten. (p. 163)

Lipman is talking primarily about music composed since World War I. At least until that time, he says, performers were involved in the new music of the time because audiences expected it. After World War I, the performer found himself obliged to turn to music "already long since accepted into the museum of culture." As a result, the old repertoire, stretching "from way before Bach to Strauss and Puccini, has

been dramatically rediscovered, expanded and revitalized" (pp. 165-166).<sup>37</sup>

Why do so many feel disaffected with contemporary music? Is this really a problem unique to this era? Have composers deliberately set out to write works that no one wants to hear? Calmer voices suggest that disaffection is natural; that music, as a viable art form, must change; and that people, being people, will often resist that change. Howard, writing in mid-century more for the layman than for the professional musician, commented, "Our ancestors didn't like [modern music] either, even though their modern music was written by Monteverdi, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner. Civilized human beings are by nature too complacent to like violent changes" (1942, p. 1). And, indeed, the changes in music from one generation of composers to the next are more likely to be viewed as violent than as gentle, evolutionary

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<sup>37</sup>An interesting aspect of French musical life just after the turn of the century as Milhaud describes it is the tremendous interest in new music. Active societies for the promotion of new literature sponsored regular concerts. Composers gathered and played and sang each other's music. The impression he gives is of a very tightly knit, intensely interested and involved group of composers, performers, listeners, and critics who cared passionately enough about their art to fight for it in one way or another. Some, such as Vuillermoz, chose the pen. Others chose more deadly weapons. (One composer is said to have carried a gun in his pocket on occasion in case he should have to shoot his way out of the concert hall. This may be an apocryphal tale, but it illustrates the point.) Just how much of this may be generalized to the whole society may be open to question, however.

modifications by those who observe the changes as they are being made. Longyear (1970) writes that "throughout the history of music there has been a strong reaction against the immediately preceding musical style" (p. 167), a style which is accepted by the public and which itself may have been a strong reaction to prevailing standards.

Whether, as some suggest, composers have deliberately (for whatever reasons) chosen to write increasingly incomprehensible works is open to question. Certainly, Milhaud was not guided by a desire to foil the audience's attempt at comprehension. Rather, according to his own account, he wrote what he felt compelled to write, without concern for public reaction (whether favorable or unfavorable), or even for whether or not the piece would ever be performed at all.

As far as performance is concerned, I am completely indifferent to this question. I think that we must write our works without thinking about possible production. It happens sometimes that you have a work which is commissioned and you know that it's going to be played right away. That is very nice. But if it isn't--if you just write a work because you like to write it, and if you wait a long time before it's heard--this happens often. (1959, p. 98)

As for audience reaction, Milhaud wrote about the "scandals" (his term) surrounding the public performance of some of his works, sometimes with amusement, sometimes with exasperation. In the first case, his feeling seems to have

been that good, honest revulsion for his music is preferable to indifference. In the latter, he often noted that the public soon embraces that which it once abhorred. On this subject, Bernard Shaw observed that "the technical history of modern harmony is a history of growth of toleration by the human ear of chords that at first sounded discordant and senseless to the main body of contemporary professional musicians" (Slonimsky, 1953, p. 16).<sup>38</sup>

Some reasons for the neglect of Milhaud's vocal literature have been alluded to in the review of literature, and others may be inferred from the responses to the questionnaires, discussed in Chapter IV. Many of the reasons have nothing to do with the deep cultural biases suggested above. For the very mundane reasons that the

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<sup>38</sup>In typical acerbic style, Virgil Thomson writes that there is no reason why anyone who takes as little trouble should find twentieth-century music to be senseless. It is what is known as "classical" music that should be incomprehensible to twentieth-century listeners, he says, because its "significant content" was determined by "men whose modes of thought and attitudes of passions were as different from ours as those of Voltaire and Goethe and Rousseau . . . were from those of Bernard Shaw . . . and Gertrude Stein and Mickey Mouse" (Howard, 1942, p. 16). Thomson nonetheless offers advice to composers which, he suggests, would help music "to become meaningful again." Composers should stop being public idols and composing for eternity. They should rid themselves of the "clutches of historicism," compose for the moment, and then let their works disappear, just as thousands of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century operas, oratorios, and cantatas have disappeared: "Only musicologists regret their absence" (Thomson, 1970, p. xv).

works and supporting material are not readily available, they are not used. Furthermore, in the college studio, the selection of literature may have a good deal to do with the skills of student accompanists. Student singers and accompanists may be discouraged because Milhaud's songs often look difficult.<sup>39</sup> Milhaud said, however, that he orchestrated (in this case, set texts) with the ear and not the eye; it would seem, then, that in Milhaud's case, examination of scores with more than usual care might be fruitful.

#### Neglected Literature and the College Voice Studio

Longyear (1970) suggests that there are good reasons for using normally neglected literature in a college setting. Although his assumption that these neglected works will, almost by definition, be second rate is not entirely defensible, his points are well made and worth considering here. This repertoire is of pedagogical importance, he suggests, because it "will take a good bashing and stand up," something the masterpieces do not do gracefully. Better a good performance of a little known work than a bad one of familiar, and often difficult, standard literature.

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<sup>39</sup>Students are not the only ones to be misled. Daniel based some of his conclusions about Milhaud's compositional style on the appearance of the scores, which looked atonal. (See Chapter II, above.)

Singers have a great deal of literature from which to choose, and their problem is often one of choosing appropriate repertoire rather than of unearthing useful works. Still, performers need to be aware of "accessible worthwhile literature," and so examination of little known works is valuable. Performers on college and university campuses are in an ideal position to try these works, since they are not under the same economic pressures as professional performers.

Longyear ventures to predict composers who will be "rediscovered" by the year 2000, and he provides a description of the characteristics which will make the work of these musicians endure. Although Milhaud is not among the composers whom Longyear names, Longyear's description applies equally well to Milhaud:

[M]ost have been distinguished teachers, have an essentially intellectual approach to music, and attracted vigorous partisans as well as detractors during their lifetime. Not all of their music can be called great, and often they resorted to what their protagonists call "style traits" and their deprecators "mannerisms" to help them over awkward compositional difficulties. . . . Though some of these composers used exotic materials, they treated them as part of an underlying musical framework rather than as gimmicks. . . . Finally, all of these composers have a hard core of enthusiasts: performers as well as (if not more so than) scholars, whose activity and even fanaticism keeps a few of their works alive.  
(p. 15)

Sharon Mabry (1987, 1988), editor of the "New Directions" section the the NATS Journal, encourages singers and teachers of singing to include twentieth-century literature (which she implies is overlooked) in their performance and teaching repertoires. She approaches the issue from two directions: one, that this literature is good for vocal development and ear training, and two, that a "need to know" attitude will not cut the performer off from standard literature, but will expand his repertoire and also help the naturally occurring changes in music to occur unhindered by old expectations.

Each musician arrives at his own interpretation of the history of music, and many may disagree with Mabry's implied evolutionary view and the correlative notion that music "develops" and "improves." She does not champion twentieth-century music for its own sake, however; rather, she makes a case for the establishment of a standard twentieth-century repertoire, which can happen only as music is performed and, hence, evaluated. Neither does she advocate neglecting standard works. In choosing to perform the songs of Milhaud, or of any other twentieth-century composer for that matter, a singer makes no irrevocable judgments about the eternal value of the music. At the least, he broadens his repertoire; at the most, he finds a rare gem.

### Translations

Understanding the text of a song is clearly desirable for its own sake as well as for musical reasons, and since most young singers are not fluent in many languages, they must depend upon prepared translations. Teachers responding to the questionnaire noted the necessity for carefully prepared translations of French texts as an aid to teaching. Lacking these, the student and the teacher are left to their own devices for the preparation of translations.

This is no easy task. For the text to have meaning in translation (assuming it had meaning in the original) the translator must make a distinction between literal translations, where common ideas often have strange sounding twists, and idiomatic or vernacular English representation of the meaning of the text. (The "poetic" or metrical renderings of texts which are often found in song anthologies often have little to do with original meaning, and are, in any event, not usually the domain of student translators.)

In The Modern Researcher, Barzun and Graff (1985) discuss the problems of translation, and note that the translator has two tasks: to transfer the full contents of the original, and to transfer the full intention that goes with them. Translation from French to English is especially



sensitive, for French is, of all leading European languages, the language that is "most unlike English in the movement of its thought and the most deceptively like English in its vocabulary" (p. 351).

As between any two languages, some words simply do not translate well from French to English. Literal translations are useful in that they aid the singer to see the connection between the music and the text. However, such translations are not necessarily suitable as translations of meaning. Unfortunately, the nature of language is such that some of the meaning is almost inevitably lost in translation. Sometimes the poet's intent is ambiguous in the original, which complicates the translation process considerably, for the translator must choose the meaning he wishes to convey.

Barzun and Graff write that all translation results in a paraphrase of an original text. This paraphrase, they say, is the "only wording that deserves to be called translation" (p. 364), for only this transfer from the literal to the idiomatic reveals the meaning of the text. They warn that successful translation depends not only upon the translator's knowledge of the language being translated, but upon his knowledge of his own language. "It follows that one can translate faithfully only from a language one knows like a native into a language one knows like a

practiced writer" (p. 354). Barzun and Graff suggests a three-step process for preparing translations:

(1) a rough draft, quickly made with the original at hand; (2) a second draft, some days later, with the original out of sight: if you find a strange combination of English words, a twisted idiom, replace it by what the sense and the language require; (3) a third and possibly final draft, for which you consult the original, phrase by phrase, to make sure that all the ideas and implication have found a place somewhere in your version. Then, perhaps, you have a piece of prose that may pass for a translation. (p. 356)

### Characteristics of French Art Song

The present section is intended to serve not as an exhaustive review of the stylistic history of the French art song, but as a guide to those qualities of the French art song which might be observed in the works of Darius Milhaud.

It is not uncommon to find comparative descriptions of French and German style. An example of this may be found in James Husst Hall's The Art Song (1953), wherein the author compares the temperament, goal, treatment of a romantic subject, rhythm, melody, harmony, and form of French and German songs. Predictably, the French song is described as rational, elegant, sensitive to poetic rhythm, and possessed of supple, sweet, sometimes chromatic melodies; the German Lied is described as sentimental, warm, highly rhythmical without particular regard to text, and possessed of melodies that are mostly diatonic (pp. 133-135).

This view of French song, though by Hall's own admission over-simplified, compares closely with the view that the French have of their own music, a view which takes into account certain identifiable national traits and often expresses them by contrast with the German Lied. A few quotations serve to illustrate the point.

Koechlin on Fauré's songs:


[E]xternally and inwardly, he shows a subtlety--French and quite special (indefinable in a few words)--which stems from the musical language, the nature of personal taste, a certain restraint in expression, an imagination rich, varied, and precise. There is no comparison between his mélodie and the German Lied. (Cox, 1960, p. 208)

Poulenc on French song in general:

You will find sobriety and sadness in French music, as in German or Russian music. But the French have a finer sense of proportion. We realize that sombreness and good humour are not mutually exclusive. French composers, too, write profound music; but when they do, it is leavened with that lightness of spirit without which life would be unendurable. (Cox, 1960, p. 198)

Milhaud on the characteristics of French music:

The characteristics of French music are to be found in a certain fluency, something sober and clear, with some measure of romanticism, and a strong sense of proportion and design in the construction of a work, in a desire to express one's self with clearness, simplicity, and conciseness. (Milhaud, 1923, p. 546)

 In The Interpretation of French Song, Pierre Bernac articulates the differences between French and German song, differences which express divergent world-views and

philosophies. As the performer must be aware of these, Bernac outlines his conclusions on the performance of French song for singers and pianists (1970, p. 2ff). Although his discussion and conclusions are ill-served by condensation and paraphrase, his points are summarized below.

Characteristics which Bernac identifies as common to all French music and hence to all French song include the following:

1. The aim of French music is to give aesthetic pleasure through forms that are stripped of all philosophical, literary, or humanistic influences and which are characterized by beauty of sonority, subtle harmony and supple modulations which result in coloristic effects, and beautiful melodic lines.

2. French taste "abhors overstatement and venerates concision and diversity," and so composers often deliberately choose concentrated forms.<sup>40</sup>

3. French music conveys precise and colorful description, or the suggestion of a poetic climate. Bernac quotes composer Henry Barraud who explains that "there is

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<sup>40</sup> Compare this with Adolf Weissman's assertion that young French composers of the early years of this century had no inclination to learn the discipline of longer forms and so contented themselves with shorter forms which, he implies, are easier to write (1925, p. 196).

nothing like the unexpressed to make the inexpressible understood."

3. French music often expresses moods and impressions rather than precise emotions.

4. The French mélodie often reacts against sentimental effusion. It is a work in which

the heart plays its part, but which, in its poem and its music, is an art infinitely more concerned with sensitive perceptions and impressions, more intellectual and more objective, than a German Lied, which is almost always subjective, both musically and poetically.

5. Unlike the German Lied, the French mélodie is not closely related to the folk-song.<sup>41</sup>

Implications for singers and accompanists include the following:

1. The first duty of the performer is to cultivate the precision of French music in his performance. This precision may be reflected in a certain severity, especially as regards tempo. Rubato, says Bernac, is virtually excluded. It is only after precision is achieved, he warns, that the singer can begin to consider the characteristic French sensuousness of sound in his performance.

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<sup>41</sup>This may not be entirely true of Milhaud's works. However, the folk echoes in his songs are most prominent in those based on Jewish themes and therefore may be more Jewish than French. On the other hand, the incidental music for Bertran de Born, from which the Trois chansons de troubadour are drawn, is based on Provençal folk themes, according to the composer.

2. The vocal line must be phrased with extreme smoothness; it must never be sacrificed to the declamation of the poem. The interpretation of the text is important, but first consideration should be given to the music.

3. The singer and pianist must remember that the French composer "never gives way to sentimentality or emphasis and abominates overstatement." Hence, they must combine in their performance precision with a controlled lyricism, characterized by moderation of expression. Interpreters of French song should have "a critical capacity, which after all is no more than one of the most vigorous forms of intelligence."

#### Analysis of Selected Songs

Included here are sample analyses of selected songs drawn from four sets of Milhaud's songs. These sets are not necessarily equivalent to traditional song cycles; two sets consist of songs drawn from incidental music for other genres. These analyses are not intended to be exhaustive; they are meant merely to demonstrate that there are, among Milhaud's many songs, some which are appropriate for the college voice studio and to provide examples of some of those songs. Further, they are intended to provide an approach to the songs which might render them less formidable than first impressions might suggest.

Songs were selected for examination and possible inclusion in the study from the revised repertoire list prepared by Jane Hohfeld Galante for her translation of Paul Collaer's Darius Milhaud. The sets of songs selected for preliminary examination were relatively short, came from different periods in the composer's life, and had texts from a variety of poets (including those who were known to be friends or favorite poets of the composer). Some sets were extracted from incidental music for films or plays, others were composed for their own sakes. Out of curiosity, the researcher included songs with English texts in this preliminary examination. Only songs which were written for voice and piano, or those with a piano reduction of a larger score were considered.

From 17 sets or cycles by Milhaud and one song contained in a cycle written by several composers, including Milhaud, for the centennial of Chopin's birth (a total of 87 songs), eight songs were selected for analysis. Selection was made according to considerations which were primarily technical and pedagogical in nature: the range, rhythmic movement or metric intricacies, intervallic relationships in the melody, anticipated problems in vocal production.

The final selection included the following songs<sup>42</sup>:

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<sup>42</sup>The debated issue of the integrity of the cycle and the composer's intent did not enter into selection of individual songs for analysis. It was not considered

Deux chansons (extraites du film Madame Bovary),  
Op. 128d (two songs)

Catalogue de fleurs, Op. 60 (two songs from the total  
of seven)

Trois poèmes de Jean Cocteau, Op. 59 (three songs)

Trois chansons de troubadour, Op. 152b (one song)

Only one of these sets of songs (Trois chansons de troubadour) was obtained from a music supplier, which demonstrates once again the difficulty in obtaining scores, but does not suggest that they are impossible to find. (Jane Galante's list of publishers, carefully cross-referenced, should be most helpful in locating French scores.) The others were obtained, for research purposes only, from the Milhaud Archive at Mills College.

Analyses were made as appropriate for each song, not following a rigid format, but including some or all of the following: a preliminary overview of the song, background on the origin of the song, form, text, musical features of the accompaniment, and pedagogical problems which the song might present. These included problems of hearing intervallic relationships, interpretation, vocal production, and ensemble.

The analyses, particularly those portions which have to do with musical features of the voice and piano parts, are

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essential to take an aesthetic stand on the integrity of the cycle in order to demonstrate an analytical process.



most useful if used in conjunction with the entire score. Isolated measures often do not serve well to represent the point and do not provide the overview necessary to dispel the reservations which students may feel upon first looking at the songs. For this reason, musical excerpts are not provided, although information on obtaining the scores is given.

Translations do not appear with any of the songs chosen for analysis. Those which are included here are by the researcher and are intended to be working translations. It should be noted that, even for a native speaker of French, some of the texts are ambiguous and, on occasion, even non-sensical (just as some poetry in English makes no "sense" literally and is open to a wide range of interpretations outside of the literal realm). This, of course, is one of the difficulties of teaching French literature, and it is advisable that students realize that, for some things, there simply are no definitive answers.

Information concerning publication and origin of the songs is drawn from the catalogue of composition compiled by Madeleine Milhaud from the composer's notebooks and revised by Jane Hohfeld Galante. This catalogue appears in Galante's translation of Paul Collaer's Darius Milhaud, p. 235ff.

## 1. CHANSON DE L'AVEUGLE

Identification

This is the first of two songs in the set Deux chansons, Op. 128d, transcribed from the incidental music for the film Madame Bovary, published in Paris in 1933. The songs are dedicated to Milhaud's friend Roger Désormière, conductor for the recording of the incidental music. Milhaud's first entry on Désormière in his autobiography reads, "There was a young flautist in the orchestra, Roger Désormière, who stuck up for me unceasingly. He lived opposite me and often came to take me out with his motorcycle and sidecar, visiting the country around Paris, which he knew intimately" (1949/1953, p. 110).

Publication Information

These songs were published in Paris by Enoch; the copyright date on the score is 1934. The American agent is Associated Music Publishers (cross-referenced in Galante's publishers list to Schirmer, which is cross-referenced to Schirmer sales, Hal Leonard Publications, 8112 W. Blue Mountain Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213).

Text

The text is by Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), author of the novel Madame Bovary.

Chanson de l'aveugle

Souvent la chaleur d'un beau jour  
Fait rêver fillette à l'amour.  
Pour amasser diligemment  
Les épis que sa faux moissonne,  
Ma Nanette va s'inclinant  
Vers le sillon qui nous les donne.  
Il souffla bien fort ce jour là  
Et le jupon court s'envola.

Song of the Blind Man

Often the warmth of a beautiful day makes a young girl dream of love. Bending over the furrows, my Nanette carefully harvests the wheat. The wind blew hard that day, and her petticoat blew away.

This fairly simple text illustrates the difficulties of a translation which, in order to be more idiomatic, omits words which the singer needs to understand. A more literal translation of lines three through six is

In order to gather diligently the grains of wheat  
which her scythe harvests, my Nanette goes,  
bending over the furrows which we give to them  
(i.e., the wheat).

The internal division of the eight-line poetic text is here unambiguous: based both on content and on rhyme-scheme, it is very clearly divided into three unequal parts. The first part consists of the opening couplet (with jour rhyming roughly with amour), which introduces the poem with

an innocent, perhaps platitudinous, general statement:

"Often the warmth of a beautiful day makes a young girl dream of love." The second part consists of four lines in the ABAB scheme; as with the first part, the completion of the rhyme also completes the image of a young girl harvesting wheat. The third and final part consists, like the first, of a couplet (là and envola) with a relatively simple message: "The wind blew hard that day, and her petticoat blew away."

There is a bittersweet quality about the striking visual imagery in a poem titled "Song of the Blind Man." The task at present, however, is not to analyze the text, but rather to analyze the song in light of the relationship between music and text. To what extent does the music support the picture in the text, and to what extent does it undermine it? In other words, to what extent does the music take an ironic position with regard to the text?

Like the poem, the song is divided into three parts (plus an introduction), but the musical divisions do not correspond exactly to the poetic divisions. These musical divisions are demarcated by rests and melodic changes in the voice part, and by melodic and harmonic changes in the accompaniment.

The first couplet is set to a four-bar melody (measures 5-8) which is completely unambiguous in its

G-major tonality. (Milhaud anticipates this melody by using it as an introduction, measures 1-4.) Thus the introduction and the first couplet may be considered the first part of the song.

The second part of the song begins in measure 9, with the first measure of the melody transposed to A minor in the accompaniment. The voice enters a measure later (measure 10) with a contrasting melody. The change of key is temporary: by measure 13, the dominant of G major is again established, and the piano ends this second part (measures 14-15) with an echo of the end of the voice's melody (measures 12-13). The text to this second part of the song is the second two lines of the poem: half of the interlocking middle quatrain.

The third part of the song is the longest part, roughly equal in extent to the first two parts together. It begins by introducing a third melodic gesture in the voice (measures 16ff), accompanied by an extensive dominant pedal on D. The text consists of the last four lines of the poem. Milhaud thus cuts across the metrical division; but in doing so he combines the active lines of the poem. Milhaud shows himself musically sensitive to the text: The D pedal carries through until the text ce jour là. On là, the chromatic passing tone D-sharp is introduced, moving to E. (This is very similar to a deceptive cadence, V-vi, in

standard tonal practice.) Thus, the chord changes for the pointed last line, Et le jupon court s'envola, which is set to a modified cadence in G.

The compositional style is very much more conservative than in many of Milhaud's songs. It is a good illustration of the validity of Lenormand's opinion that "some works based on harmonies relatively simple can invoke an intensely modern atmosphere." Many of the progressions which Milhaud uses in this song are actually identifiable common-practice progressions, with some slight, but important, modifications. The chromatic parallel tenths in measure 3, for example, are not standard, but they are completely understandable in context, connecting the G major triad in first inversion (I, which arrives in measure 2) with the D major triad in first inversion (V, which arrives in measure 4). It is very clear in context that this is heard as a tonic-dominant motion. At the entrance of the voice (measure 5), the same technique--chromatic parallel tenths--is used to enhance the melody. (This could be a bit of anticipatory word-painting on Milhaud's part, suggestive perhaps of the wind which occurs later in the poem and lending an additional layer of musical irony: the passage is ironic because the literal text at this point concerns a more prosaic sentiment, with its warm day and young girl with thoughts of love.)

Some of Milhaud's usual harmonic freedom can be seen in the song, and it is valuable to be aware of his particular liberties. For example, in measure 10 the bass of the piano begins a fragmentary imitation of the vocal line (E C B A B C D E) in the previous measure. The imitation in the bass, however, begins not on E but on G, which produces the harmony of an A minor chord with a G in the bass in measure 11 (a ii<sup>4</sup>/2). In traditional tonal harmony, that G would be regarded as a dissonance, and its treatment would be anything but free; here it is treated merely as a color, in accordance with Lenormand's observation that in the modern style, sevenths may be treated in this coloristic manner, without regard to traditional rules of resolution. There is a similar harmonic liberty in the left hand of the piano in the next measure: the imitated strand ends on E, and the clear context (from a tonal point of view) is ii-V. There is no doubt that this cadential progression in G is intended and heard. But the vocal phrase ends on E, and so does its left-hand imitation. Thus there is here an example of one of Milhaud's favorite techniques, the added second--at measure 12 there is a D dominant seventh chord, with E in the bass.<sup>43</sup> Here again is a dissonance which is

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<sup>43</sup>Cf. Lenormand's explanation of added seconds, such as the E added here to the D major chord. It is worthwhile recalling Lenormand's view that these added seconds originate melodically.

used for its coloristic value. This chord is apparently one of Milhaud's favorites (at least in this piece), for it recurs in the piano echo of the voice melody (measure 14) and in another form in measure 17.

The harmonies in the last part of the song are more dissonant and less conventional. Along with the D pedal in the bass, there is a G pedal in the middle register of the right hand.<sup>44</sup> Heard in terms of conventional harmony, the G in measures 18-20 must be considered dissonant, with a tendency to resolve to F-sharp. This resolution is delayed for three measures (until the previously mentioned deceptive cadence in measure 21), at which time it resolves with the change of harmony.

To be noted at the end is another point of imitation between voice and left hand of the piano. The melody to which the last line is sung (Et le jupon court s'envola) is quite tonal, quite convincing. The bass line used to set it (B C D G) is also quite tonal. However, when combined there is a sense of disjunction, or dissociation. In the simplest terms, the chords are not quite "correct," but they are not so incorrect as to produce a feeling of chaos. The chord on

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<sup>44</sup>Again, it is worthwhile remembering Lenormand's discussion on this point. Lenormand's observations of particular relevance to the present analysis are (1) that pedals "have become, in modern writing, a source of harmonic complexity," and (2) that pedals may consist of two or more notes simultaneously.



B is a simple G chord (I). Against C, a bass note which by itself would imply a IV or perhaps a ii6, the vocal line produces F-sharp, creating a tritone dissonance with the bass with the expectation (at least in conventional harmony) that the bass would resolve down by step. But the C becomes just another instance of the use of dissonant tones to color the harmony: the bass progresses to D, exactly as it would had it received consonant harmonization, abandoning the dissonance, as it had in several previous measures. The bass D implies of course a V chord: however, that structure does not explicitly occur; on beats 2 and 3, B is substituted for A in the chord (creating a coloristic first-inversion B minor chord), and on beat four, G is substituted for F-sharp (as it had been in measures 18-20). Thus there is the general atmosphere of tonality, though there is something askew, or disassociated about its details.

This final vocal phrase is set imitatively in the bass to end the song. Again the conclusion must be drawn that melodic imitation is apparently more important to Milhaud than the harmonic structure of the cadence, because this melody (used as a bass) does not support a strong V-I (dominant-tonic) close.

## 2. LA CHANSON DU PRINTEMPS

Identification

This is the second of the songs from Madame Bovary.

Text

Galante's catalogue lists Flaubert as the author of both texts, but the score bears the inscription, "Paroles du chevalier BARD." If this is indeed an identification of the author of the text, the form of the title is strange. A search in standard references on French literature (Littérature française, Dictionnaire des littératures de langue française, Histoire de la littérature française, and, in English, The Oxford Companion to French Literature and The Concise Oxford Dictionary of French Literature) reveals nothing about such an author. However, the Larousse Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe Siècle contains a small article on Joseph Bard, "littérateur français" (1803-1861), who signed his works "Chevalier, puis Commandeur Bard de la Cote d'Or, ce qui a parfois egayé les petits journaux" (p. 230) ("Chevalier, and sometimes Commander Bard of the Cote d'Or, which occasionally enlivened the small journals"). In spite of this little vanity, Bard was a writer with credentials: in addition to his literary work,

he made a significant contribution to documenting important antiquities of his region.

### La Chanson du Printemps

[Refrain:]

Ah! reste, reste dans mon coeur, premier rêve d'amour,  
Comme dans un ruisseau la pourpre d'un beau jour.

[Tra la la la la la la la.]

[Verse 1:]

A mon amant j'ai fait don de ma vie,  
Tous mes échos seront pour mes accents,  
Tous mes matins pour ses heureux printemps,  
Tous mes plaisirs pour son âme ravie.

[Repeat refrain]

[Verse 2:]

Sois-en bien sûr, j'irai dans ta pensée,  
Naïve et simple, épancher mes secrets,  
Ainsi qu'un lys verse dans les forêts  
Sa poudre d'or sur la fraîche rosée.

[Repeat refrain]

This text is problematic for the non-fluent translator. Some of the phrases are very strange indeed, and the meaning can only be guessed at. Particularly curious is the second line of the verse, Tous mes échos seront pour mes accents, literally, "All of my echoes [other possible dictionary meanings are reports, rumors, accounts] will be for my accents."

Spring Song

[Refrain:]

Ah! Stay, stay in my heart, first dream of love,  
 As the crimson of a lovely day remains in a stream.  
 [Tra la la la la la la la la]

[Verse 1:]

I have made a gift of life to my lover.  
 All my echoes will be for my accents,  
 All my mornings for his happy springtime,  
 All of my pleasures for his ravished soul.

[Repeat refrain]

[Verse 2:]

Be very sure of it: I will go in your thoughts,  
 Naive and simple, pouring out my secrets,  
 Just as in the forest a lily  
 Spills its golden pollen on the cool dew.

[Repeat refrain]

These texts contrast in content: The first is an almost folk-like depiction of a simple scene; the second is an extravagant expression of highly romantic love. Are these, perhaps, intended to show the contrasting elements of Emma Bovary's life: her provincial surroundings in conflict with her excessively romantic imagination?

It is particularly important in this song to distinguish the text from its setting. The text itself seems to consist of two simple, four-line verses, with the rhyme scheme ABBA, plus a two-line recurring refrain. The refrain expresses a simple romantic sentiment (cf. the first two lines of the other Bovary song): "Ah, stay, stay in my

heart, first dream of love, as the crimson of a lovely day remains in a stream."

The first verse takes the point of view of a lover talking about his (or, more probable considering the context, her) love. "To my lover I have made a gift of my life. All my echoes (all traces of me?) will be for my<sup>45</sup> accents (?); all of my mornings for his happy springtime; all my pleasures for his ravished soul."

The second verse takes an ambiguous point of view: it could be from the lover to the beloved, or from the beloved to the lover, or even from the dream which had been objectively addressed in the refrain. "Be very sure of it: I will go in your thoughts, naive and simple, pouring out my secrets, just as in the forest a lily spills its golden pollen on the cool dew."

As in the "Song of the Blind Man," this text appears to be straightforward. It can be taken to be ironic only when the context in which it appears is considered: its internal content betrays no necessity to read irony into its literal message. If one assumes that this song, with its "first dream of love," is sung by Madame Bovary, however, then the irony is clear.

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<sup>45</sup>This could be a misprint: mes (my) may inadvertently have been substituted for ses (his), due possibly to the analogous mes in Verse 2.

Much like the text itself, the musical setting is apparently simple, with slight complications due to internal repetitions.<sup>46</sup> Once again, Milhaud's approach appears to be lightly ironical, due to the simultaneous presence of traditional tonal features and events which tend to undermine tonality. The meter, six-eight, is conducive to a certain sing-song quality which itself suggests both innocence and irony. The tonal implications are very straightforward: apart from an initial descent from F above middle C to middle C (measures 1-9), the lowest note is always either F or C (I or V of F major).

Probably the clearest way to present the form of this song is as a list. Note that the short introduction is the only music which is not repeated; that is, numbers 6 through 9 on the list below are musical repetitions of numbers 2 through 5).

1. Introduction (measures 1-2);
2. Refrain, simple version (measures 3-10);
3. Verse 1, part 1 (measures 11-18);
4. Verse 1, part 2 (measures 19-26);
5. Refrain, enhanced version (measures 27-40);
6. Refrain, simple version (measures 3-10);

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<sup>46</sup>These repetitions appear to be required by the recurrence of the opening refrain melody: the poetic meter of the refrain, and that of the second two lines of the Verse needed to be adjusted to make the repetition possible.

7. Verse 2, part 1 (measures 11-18);
8. Verse 2, part 2 (measures 19-26);
9. Refrain, enhanced version (measures 27-40).

Although short, the introduction serves to establish the tonal language: the melody is identical to that which sets the words Tra la la la la la when these are added to the refrain after each verse. The chord in the first measure is sparse (F and G stated together, plus other chordal notes implied by the melody: B-flat and C), and the effect is of a V7 against a tonic pedal in the key of F major. The second measure consists solely of an F-major triad (as a dotted half note).

The first setting of the refrain (Ah! reste, reste dans mon coeur, measures 3-10) is a good illustration of Lenormand's thesis that the "modern" school was obsessed with seconds. The vocal melody could be set less imaginatively to the common chords I, IV, V. If the tune is sung without the piano part, these chords immediately suggest themselves. This simple implied background, coupled with the sing-song nature of the rhythm in six-eight meter, suggest a children's song. Hence, it might be said that the initial refrain is melodically innocent.

The actual harmonic setting in the accompaniment, however, consists of a series of parallel seconds, descending by step (from F to C, as mentioned above). Thus

there is a dissonant background to the child-like theme, and, once again, the music makes an ironic statement about the poem.

The verses are divided by Milhaud into two parts. Once again, Milhaud does not scruple to compose a musical setting which contradicts the poetic setting. The rhyme scheme of each verse is ABBA, but the musical setting takes the first two lines (AB) as one unit (part 1), and isolates these lines from the second unit (BA, part 2) by means of melodic and accompanimental contrast. Part 1 of the Verse consists of a tune which sounds a bit like it might derive from a medieval motet. The accompaniment consists of a repeated pedal C (middle C), and various additions to the dominant seventh chord, chiefly an ascending line from D to D, and recurring off-beat seconds, C B-flat. In Part 2 of the Verse, the original refrain melody recurs verbatim. This time, however, the pedal C is maintained in the accompaniment, making the implied harmonic background V rather than I. The V background contradicts the I of the tune, deepening the irony.

The music from measure 27 to the end has been labeled an "enhanced refrain," for both textual and musical reasons. Textually, it is enhanced by the addition of the syllables Tra la la, and so forth. Musically, it is enhanced by the introduction of a third distinct melody (the



first two melodies being that of the initial refrain and that of the first part of the Verse), and by the change of bass to F below middle C. The change of bass creates a tonic context, which generally contrasts with the dominant context immediately preceding. Interestingly, it is only in this enhanced refrain that melody notes foreign to F major are introduced. The tune itself begins with the descending chromatic line F E E-flat D, lending intensity to the recurrence of the initial refrain text. Another intensification device is the introduction of D-flat in measure 29, implying F minor rather than F major.

#### Pedagogical Comments

These are good songs to introduce early in the curriculum of twentieth-century music because they consist almost entirely of standard tonal progressions, slightly modified. This short set of songs (lasting only two minutes and 35 seconds in performance) exhibits some common traits of Milhaud's writing, such as the D pedal and the coloristic use of dissonance, but it eschews some more difficult techniques such as ostinato patterns, bitonality, or highly dissonant chord combinations. Nevertheless, it is highly characteristic in a number of ways (the non-correspondence of melody to text; the use of the piano now to accompany, now to answer the voice; the modification of traditional

tonal formulas). Above all, it is a good example of the ironic approach Milhaud often takes to song composition; in this case the irony is not heavy-handed, but is still accessible.

If the length of the discussion seems more than such short songs can support, it is because these songs are microcosms of Milhaud's style. The intricate structure, the craftsmanship of what appears to be minor forms is fascinating, and bears witness to Milhaud's skill. There is irony here, too: like Boulez's lengthy explanation, these discussions take far longer than performing the songs would require.

### 3. LES FRITILLAIRES

#### Identification

This is the third song in the famous Catalogue de fleurs, Op. 60, written in Aix in 1920 and first performed in 1922. The songs are dedicated to the memory of Guy-Pierre Fauconnet, friend of members of Les Six and painter who designed the masks and costumes for the ballet Le Boeuf sur le toit. Fauconnet died quite suddenly of heart disease during the preparation of Le Boeuf for performance.

### Publication and Recording Information

The cycle was published by Durand; the copyright date on the score is 1924. The U.S. agent for Durand is Theodore Presser Co., Presser Place, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.

Francine Bloch's discography for the 1987 edition of Ma vie heureuse (Milhaud's autobiography in the French version) lists a 1978 Nimbus recording of this work by Hugues Cuénod, tenor, and Geoffrey Parsons, piano.

### Text and Author

Detractors accused Milhaud of using descriptions from a florist's catalogue as texts for this set of songs, and they were used to support the assertion that he would write a song to any text, and not concern himself overmuch about its literary quality.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the texts are, according to Milhaud, "delightful poems by Lucien Daudet inspired by a florist's catalogue."

Lucien Daudet, son of Alphonse Daudet (author of L'Arlesienne, for which Bizet wrote his famous music), was also a friend and a member of the group of musicians, artists, and writers who gave each other mutual support in Paris. Milhaud (1949/1953, p. 103) writes that Daudet was "devotedly helpful" during the preparation of Le Boeuf, and

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<sup>47</sup>This is a criticism often leveled against other great composers of song as well, including Schubert.

that he diplomatically managed the crush of people who came to see it after Cocteau, afraid no one would attend, promised more boxes than the theater had to offer. Though Daudet is mentioned several times in Milhaud's autobiography, where he is described as a writer, he occurs rarely in references on French literature. A search in 22 reference books produced two items of information about Lucien Daudet: a photograph of Daudet with Marcel Proust in Histoire de la littérature française (p. 599), and a less than one-line citation in Littérature française to the effect that he had produced a study of his father's works (p. 459). The National Union Catalog, however, reveals that Lucien Daudet was a writer of varied interests. Works listed there include editions of letters (Proust's, his father's, and others), reminiscences, a commentary on the novel, and a biography of the Empress Eugénie, Consort of Napoleon III (1971, Vol. 133, pp. 606-607).

### Les Fritillaires

Les Fritillaires aiment les endroits exposés au soleil et à l'abri du vent et des gélées printanières. Pendant l'hiver on les couvre. On les appelle aussi Oeufs de Vanneau et Couronnes Impériales.

Fritillaries<sup>48</sup>

Fritillaries like places exposed to the sun and protected from the spring wind and cold. During the winter they should be covered. They are also called "Lapwing's Eggs" and "Imperial Crowns."

Other analyses in this study demonstrate that Milhaud was quite sensitive to poetic texts, and that he was capable of creating musical settings which enhanced these texts. Therefore, it is important to investigate Milhaud's compositional procedure in this most unusual opus consisting of "prose-poetry."

The setting of prose or prose-like text would seem to involve a fundamentally different approach than the setting of poetry. The previous analyses have demonstrated that Milhaud reacted to the internal structure of a poem. Often he enhanced the poem with internal repetitions of words, and often the musical structure he created would somehow contradict or "cut across" the poetic structure. However, the juxtaposition of a certain musical form against a related but not identical poetic form gave Milhaud at least a point of departure, and the contradiction between the two forms (musical and poetic) served to enhance Milhaud's gentle and ever-present irony. With prose, there is no

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<sup>48</sup>Fritillaria is the name of a genus of plants. A fritillary is any of a group of lily-like plants with bell-shaped, spotted, drooping flowers.

form, or, more precisely, the form is linear rather than recurring, and the expectations are quite different. The compositional task is, if anything, even greater: this is the closest resemblance song composition can have to purely instrumental composition.

It is not surprising, then, that Milhaud turns in this particular song to the device of canon--an organizing principle of great antiquity, and one which does not accommodate itself easily to the strophes of poetry. The canon begins in the higher bass register (over a pedal consisting of a perfect fifth, F-C). After an interval of two beats, the voice enters on the same tune, with slight rhythmic adjustments to accommodate the syllables of the text. In a remarkable contrapuntal tour de force, a third voice enters on the canon: the upper register of the right hand, two beats after the entrance of the voice, on the first beat of measure 2.

Here again, the tune itself is rather simple and tonal, implying F major. The harmonic structure, too, implies F major (measure 1 sounds like a tonic chord, with added notes; similarly, measures 2 and 3 sound like subdominant and dominant chords, respectively, with notes stacked in fifths above the root and fifth of the chord tones).

The song divides naturally into two parts. The first part is this canon. It expresses the words: "Fritillaries

like places exposed to the sun and protected from the spring wind and the cold. During winter they should be covered."

On the last syllable of couvre there is a change which inaugurates the second half of the song. The syllable vre is set to B-flat, the first note which does not follow the canon. Thus, the canon is broken at this point (measure 8).

The final four measures ("They are also called Lapwing's Eggs and Imperial Crowns") receive a different (but not entirely different) setting. The technique of building harmonies on fifths remains, but the rhythm in the accompaniment is altered (from sixteenth, two thirty-seconds, two sixteenths to syncopated eighths and sixteenth in measure 9), and there is an unexpected tonal shift to A in measure 10 ("Lapwing's Eggs"), followed by an immediate return to F ("Imperial Crowns").

#### 4. LES JACINTHES

##### Identification

This is the fourth song in Catalogue de fleurs.

##### Les Jacinthes

Albertine blanc pur. Lapeyrouse mauve clair. Roi des Belges carmin pur, Roi des bleus, bleu foncé. Mademoiselle de Malakoff jaune vif à bouquet.

### Hyacinths

Pure white Albertine. Light purple Lapeyrouse. King of the Belgians, pure crimson; King of the Blues, dark blue. Mademoiselle de Malakoff, bright yellow, in clusters.

Like Fritillaires, the internal division of this song has to be made on purely musical grounds, since the text is more prosaic than poetic. The song may be divided into three sections, based on the text. The first section consists of the first two sentences, which are incomplete sentences lacking a verb. The function of these two sentences is simply to list varieties and colors. ("Pure white Albertine. Light purple Lapeyrouse.")

The second section sets the third sentence, which, though commercially of the same intent as the first two sentences, is in fact more complicated, and more poetic. ("The King of the Belgians, pure crimson; King of the Blues, dark blue"). It has an internal structure that is partially parallel, and partially progressive. The first two clauses begin with roi; at the end of the second clause is the word bleus, the singular form of which becomes the first word of the third clause. Thus this third sentence has an interlocking quality, and apparently this suggested a differing musical treatment.

The fourth sentence ("Mademoiselle de Malakoff, bright yellow, in clusters") is of a slightly different structure,



because its final clause does not concern color. In a very short third section, this sentence receives a treatment which distinguishes it from the other two sentences.

These three sections show three difference facets of Milhaud's technique. The first section features an ostinato in the bass, a quarter note pattern (C E D G) which clearly implies C major. This tonality is strengthened by the vocal melody in this section, which consists entirely of arpeggiation on the C major triad. There is a hint of bitonality in measure 3 in the accompaniment (with a sixteenth-note A major arpeggiation followed by a sixteenth-note B-flat major arpeggiation). The technique (though not those keys) returns in measures 6 and 7, which feature B major, C-sharp major, and D major right-hand arpeggiations against the C major bass ostinato.

With the Roi des Belges (measure 9) a new setting appears: a descending F major scale in the voice and piano right hand, against alternating quarter-note thirds (C E and D F) in the piano left hand. Insofar as the melody seems to be independent of the undulating harmony, this is an example of bitonality. On Roi des bleus, the right hand and vocal melody shift down a step, with the right hand presenting its line in parallel perfect fifths against an unchanging left hand.

The setting of Mademoiselle de Malakoff occupies just three measures, and Milhaud treats this passage almost as a coda.

This song shows a prose (i.e., nonrecurring) setting in the music to match the prosiac quality of the text.

### Pedagogical Comments

These are tiny pieces (the entire cycle takes only a little more than five minutes to perform), and they are truly, as Milhaud said, delightful. The melodies are clearly diatonic in the beginning and are enhanced by the judicious addition of altered notes which color the text at appropriate points. In "Hyacinths" the piano doubles the voice in the section with chromatic changes. The accompaniments, while subtle, are not of particular difficulty.

The text of "Hyacinths" is pure whimsey. The text is rich with cultural references which are not immediately apparent to the non-Gallic translator. For instance, one of the varieties of flower listed in the "catalog" is a light purple Lapeyrouse. Was it, perhaps, named for the French naturalist Philippe La Peyrouse (1744-1815), who wrote books on the flora of the Pyrenees?

Is the Mademoiselle de Malakoff variety named for a section in the south of Paris which takes its name for a

battle in the Franco-Prussian war? Indeed, there is a mock-militaristic tone to the music, as well as to the text. One envisions tiny battalions of flowers, the troops of the King of the Belgians on one side and those of the King of the Blues ("blues" are newly enlisted soldiers) on the other.

### 5. TROIS CHANSONS DE TROUBADOUR, III

#### Identification

These songs, Op. 152b, are drawn from the incidental music for Bertran de Born, Paris, 1936. An orchestral suite and a ballet suite were drawn from the same music. The songs are dedicated to renowned French singer Pierre Bernac, whose recitals in collaboration with Poulenc are famous. Bernac is the author of the authoritative text The Interpretation of French Song (1970).

#### Publication Information

These songs were published by Salabert; the copyright date on the score is 1937. The U.S. agent for Salabert is Schirmer. (Schirmer sales are handled by Leonard. See listing under number 1 above.)

### Text and Author

The music is inscribed, "Parole de Valmy-Baisse." The name of Valmy-Baisse, described in the index of Milhaud's autobiography only as "French writer," is another which does not appear in standard references on French literature. However, a 1924 yearbook of contemporary biography (Ruffy, 1924) lists Jean Valmy-Baysse (b. 1871), described simply as "homme de lettres" (p. 741). Valmy-Baysse's works include poetry, plays, novels, and critical commentary.

Milhaud writes about this work:

I had the great good fortune to be able to take part in [the Orange Fêtes] through my music for Valmy-Baisse's Bertran de Born, which included a ballet and songs, Moyen Age fleuri, for which I used eighteenth-century Provençal themes. The Chansons de Troubadour were later taken from this work, other fragments of which were included in the finale of the Suite provençale. (Milhaud, 1949/1953, p. 249)

### Trois chansons de troubadour, III

Je suis tombé de mal en peine  
 En suivant mon coeur qui me mène  
 Et jamais  
 Ne se démailleront les rêts  
 Du filet où ma châtelaine  
 M'a pris cette fois et m'enchaîne  
 Elle plait  
 Par ses regards lancés de biais  
 Cette vive et charmante Hélène  
 J'ai terminé ma quarantaine,  
 Et je fais  
 De Lana mon unique Reine.  
 Rien dans sa beauté ne nous leurre  
 Aucun artifice n'effleure  
 Son joyeux  
 Son jeune corps si gracieux  
 Inspirant l'amour et qui fleure

La jeunesse et rompt la mal heure  
 Bien heureux  
 Celui qui pour le revoir mieux  
 Dévoile ce beau corps à l'heure  
 Où le jour meurt en sa demeure,  
 Car ses yeux verront la vie encor meilleure.

### Three Troubadour Songs, Number III

I have become quite ill in following where my heart leads. Never will the strands of the enchaining net wherein my lady has placed me this time--never will they unravel. She is attractive, this vibrant and charming Helen, with her sharp and sidewise glances. I have ended my isolation, and I make of Lana my only queen. Nothing in her beauty lures us [insincerely]; nothing artificial touches her joyful, young, grateful body, that body which blooms with youth, inspiring love and dispelling misfortune. How happy is he who unveils that lovely body as day is dying, because his eyes will see life in a better light.

This is another good example of a text which, like the net of which it speaks, is exceedingly difficult to unravel for the non-expert reader of French. The difficulties engendered by the fact that the text is evidently spoken by someone completely befuddled by love are compounded by the absence of punctuation which might clarify its denotative, if not connotative, meaning. The difficulties occasioned by the lack of punctuation are lessened, however, by the rhyme scheme, which for the first verse is aa bb aa bb aa b a and for the second aa bb aa bb a b a.

The poetry evokes antiquity by the use of unusual forms of familiar words. "Encor," for example, is not a misprint, but a poetic form of "encore." The archaic form "mal" is used for "mauvaise" as well. The Robert Dictionnaire

provides the information that, since the seventeenth century, the use of "mal" has been archaic or reserved for literary purposes (1966, p. 222).

The form of this song is as follows:

1. Introduction (of unusual length): Piano
2. Strophe: Voice (with piano)
3. Interlude (repetition of Introduction): Piano
4. Strophe: Voice (with piano)
5. Short (two-measure) conclusion in the accompaniment, which refers to the Introduction.

Like the troubadour songs for which it is named, this is truly a work for voice, with accompaniment. That is, the piano does not dominate. It could, in fact, almost be omitted, as the vocal line is understandable on its own. Nevertheless, there are several subtle ways in which the accompaniment complements the voice.

The introduction (measures 1-16) features strummed chords that are perhaps intended to be reminiscent of a lute, as well as a line that could be a reference to a recorder.

At the strophe (measures 17-42), the voice part enters alone, without accompaniment. The voice entrance is marked by the presence of E-flat, the first accidental in the work. The piano accompaniment re-enters in measures 19-21, with reference to parallel sixths of fauxbourdon. In measure 23,

the style changes radically, and the right hand appears to supply "jazz-style" chords, while the bass implies an ostinato. Measure 31 is a reference in the voice to the initial tune (the voice's first entrance), while the previous syncopation passes into the piano's right hand. There is a shift of tonality in measure 33. This shift continues the syncopation, but it also implies (or refers to) certain jazz practices. Again, the piano drops out in measure 37, possibly to emphasize the text. When the accompaniment appears again in measure 38, it is on simple rhythms, with predominantly C-based diatonic, white-note chords, and the cadence itself is clearly related, despite its liberties, to the classical tonal cadence,  $ii^6/5$ ,  $I^6/4$ ,  $V7$ ,  $I$ .

Unlike the vocal part, the accompaniment does not change in the course of the song. The Interlude (measures 42-57) is exactly equivalent to the Introduction, and the second Strophe (measures 58-83) is exactly equivalent to the first. The only added feature at the end of the song is a very short, lute-like chordal ending.

### Pedagogical Comments

The text and music flow in such a way that finding places to breathe might be difficult. Overall, the melody is tuneful, if motivic, and idiomatically vocal. There is

some "word painting" here, and some instances in which words are notated contrary to expected emphasis. However, fidelity to natural word stress is not necessarily the constant goal of French composers, Romain Rolland explained in a heated exchange with Richard Strauss.

Would you allow me to tell it to you in a friendly way? You are amazing, all you Germans, you understand nothing about our poetry, absolutely nothing. . . .What you are calling "nonchalance of declamation" is flexibility and psychological truth. We do not have just one single way of accenting a word, once and forever: it is accented differently in accordance with the meaning of the phrase and above all in accordance with the psychological makeup of the person who utters it. (Adler, 1965. p. 168)

Since the "troubadour" here is obviously suffering the pangs of completely irrational love, the student will find a challenge in determining just exactly what the text means and how best to declaim it.

One truly gratifying aspect of this song, one which the student of music history can appreciate, perhaps, is that this song is actually patterned after an identifiable type of troubadour song. Since the song is through-composed, it seems likely that Milhaud may have had in mind the vers, "whose distinguishing mark is that the melodic phrases do not repeat but differ with each line" (Ulrich and Pisk, 1963, p. 55). This song has the capacity to bring to life the music of an earlier era.



## 6-8. TROIS POEMES DE JEAN COCTEAU

Identification

The three songs in Op. 59, "Fumée," "Fête de Bordeaux," and "Fête de Montmartre," are set to texts of Jean Cocteau and dedicated to Erik Satie, composer, mentor to Les Six, and esteemed friend of the composer. Satie was at the forefront of anti-Debussyism, and often made fun of the musical establishment by means of musical jokes. In response to criticism that his music had no form, for example, he wrote Three Pieces in the Shape [Form] of a Pear.

Publication and Recording Information

This cycle was published originally by Sirene, then by Eschig. The U.S. agent for Eschig is Associated Music Publishers (see information in number 1 above).

Francine Bloch's discography notes that a 1930 Columbia recording of these songs with Milhaud accompanying his friend and frequent singer of his songs Jane Bathori was re-issued in 1964.

Text and Author

Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), author of the iconoclastic Coq et l'arlequin, was a close associate of Les Six. He

produced what Milhaud calls the "pantomime scenario" (elsewhere described as a "farcical ballet") for Le Boeuf sur le toit, mentioned above. Cocteau is described as a surrealist who exposed the meaning hidden behind everyday appearances (Beaumarchais, Couty, and Rey, 1987, p. 509).

### Fumée

C'est permis de fumer  
Gare  
L'Ecuyer de Médrano quand tu fumes ton cigare  
Saute à travers les anneaux

### Smoke

Smoking is permitted. Beware! When you smoke your cigar, the equestrian of the Medrano jumps over the rings.

The "Medrano" here is the Medrano circus. (Cocteau hired the circus's clowns, the Fratellinis, to play various roles in Le Boeuf sur le toit.) French circuses of this era were not the three-ring extravaganzas which modern students might expect. A student might find Seurat's painting of a circus bare-back rider evocative.

Like many of Milhaud's songs, this one is a complex mixture of simple elements. In isolation, the vocal melody is very simple--almost childish; the right hand and left hand piano parts are each very clear when played separately.

When they are put together, however, the resulting structure, however, is harder to hear.

As in some of the other songs, the form for the voice part is somewhat at odds with that for the piano accompaniment. The voice part falls into two parts, a six-eight section and a two-four section (measures 3-6, and 14-21, respectively). The piano part, however, contains three clear divisions: measures 1-9, six-eight meter with static but polytonal harmony, including a B/F-sharp pedal; measures 10-21, moving six-eight ostinato in the left hand against a two-four right hand; and measures 22 to the end, a slightly altered version of the original music with no voice part at all.

The most obvious problem in this song is one of ensemble. The cross-rhythms in measures 14ff. can be problematic.

### Fête de Bordeaux

Le manège à vapeur  
regarde s'en aller  
interminablement le paquebot "Touraine"  
Il donnerait tout l'or de sa gloire foraine  
Pour défaire sur l'eau son voyage enroulé

### Festival at Bordeaux

The steam-driven merry-go-round watches interminably as the steamer "Touraine" leaves. It would give all the gold of its itinerant glory to unwind on the water its wound-up journey.

The merry-go-round is moved from festival to fair. For all its itinerant life, it never goes anywhere, but merely travels in circles. This one evidently envies the steamship, which constantly comes and goes, and wishes that it, too, could make something other than its circular tour.

The text appears to be surrealistic, with its references to wistful merry-go-rounds and steamships. Here Milhaud's compositional technique of polytonality is not mechanically or thoughtlessly chosen, but is made to underscore the disassociation implicit in the text. Unrelated things (i.e., tonalities) exist together without relating. They are both present but they each retain their identity, fitting and not fitting.

There is a sing-song quality of the rhythm here, which almost seems ironic. The right hand and the left hand are at odds, and the voice part takes now one part, and now the other. For example, in measure 1 the voice enters on A-flat, which fits into the D-flat triad of the barcarolle bass in that measure. But the right hand has a melodic passage that does not accord with the implied D-flat in the left hand. It appears to be based on a lydian mode (on F), and the two most important notes seem to be F and A-natural. The A-natural accords with the right hand and clashes with the bass, just as the A-flat in the previous measure

accorded with the bass and set up a cross-relation with the right hand.

The voice part never achieves a strong third role harmonically--it is always allied either with the right hand or with the left hand. It does at one point achieve a momentary rhythmic independence, on the word interminablement (measures 5-7).

### Fêtes de Montmartre

Ne vous balancez pas si fort  
le ciel est à tout le monde  
Marin d'eau douce la nuit profonde se moque de vos ancres  
d'or  
et boit debout en silence comme du papier buvard  
votre dos bleu qui encense puissamment le boulevard

### Festival at Montmartre

Don't swing so high. The sky belongs to everyone.  
Land-lubber, the dark night makes fun of your golden anchors  
and, standing up, drinks in like a paper blotter your blue  
back, which flatters exceedingly the boulevard.

This is, perhaps, an example of Cocteau's stripping away everyday appearances (the land-lubber with his golden anchors, giving the appearance of being something he is not), although the text is unabashedly surrealistic and certainly open to interpretation.

Another, much freer, version of the text, beginning after "marin d'eau douce" (landlubber; Sunday driver; in short, one who pretends to be something he is not) might

read, "The night doesn't care about the shiny uniform you affect; it simply absorbs you (you with your very impressive appearnace), as a blotter would soak up water." It is impossible to express in English exactly the image that is evoked by the French. The word "encense," which appears in the last line, means figuratively "flatters," but recalls the swinging motion expressed in "balancez," since it is also the word that describes the motion of the priest as he swings the censer.

As in the other two songs in this set, there is a certain amount of metric change in this song. Formally, the song is virtually without subdivision, except for the three six-eight measures in the middle. In these measures, when the meter changes, all parts participate in the change. This metric change corresponds also to a change in the harmonic structure: the A pedal is abandoned, and a harmonic progression beginning with a C-sharp chord appears instead. These three measures are not substantial enough to be a contrasting middle section, but they probably have much to do with the "point" of the piece.

The section in measures 12-14 could provide some insight into M's chord-building technique: the E above middle C is always sharp; the Es an octave above and below that are always natural. The voice at this point is melodically and unambiguously in A major, however.

There is in this song a deliberate reference to the idiom of the Baroque, in particular the scalar passages in A major, and the quasi-cadence, with its imitation of a common Baroque cadential formula, in measure 5.

#### Pedagogical Comments

These texts are by far the most obscure of any presented here. They are surrealistic, and do not immediately make "sense." Interestingly, the song with the most difficult to divine text, "Festival at Montmartre," has the least problematic music. The songs are all of moderate range, and, with the exception of the metric variations mentioned above, seem to present no technical problems. The difficulty lies in making music of pieces that defy immediate understanding of the text.

## CHAPTER VI SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) was a composer of exceptional productivity and wide-ranging interests. Of the more than 400 opus numbers in his oeuvre, 64 are devoted to songs (comprising 265 individual songs). This vast and diverse body of vocal literature has lain largely neglected, however, receiving little attention in standard references, even though discussions of the composer's instrumental and stage works are common.

Reasons for the neglect vary. Milhaud's early reputation for truculence and flippancy has fueled a misunderstanding of his motives in choosing texts, and the perception that the songs as a whole are musically difficult and aesthetically inaccessible has discouraged performers and teachers from using them. In critical commentary, neglect most often stems from a mistrust of the sheer volume of Milhaud's output. Claude Rostand calls his life's work a vast, flowing river of creativity; David Cox characterizes the songs as the result of a "dreadful fertility." Cox's is the prevalent attitude.



Despite the generally unfavorable impression of the songs left by most standard sources on vocal repertoire, the fact that they are so often ignored was intriguing. The researcher believed that this large body of vocal literature, produced as it was by a composer whose own musical education was careful, thoughtful, and of very high quality, a composer of renown in other genres, is potentially a significant source of teaching material for the college voice studio. The purposes of this study, then, were united by a consideration of problems related to the teaching of Darius Milhaud's solo songs in the college voice studio.

In the review of literature, two broad areas of inquiry were pursued with a view to investigating the cultural and aesthetic milieu in which the songs appeared and the attitudes and compositional techniques that produced them. This historical/musicological research was supplemented with a sample survey in the form of a questionnaire which was distributed to 150 voice teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists in universities and colleges across the country. Responses to the questionnaire were used in establishing current practice regarding Milhaud's songs in college voice studios. In addition to descriptive information about the music programs in the respondents' universities, information was sought concerning the

respondents' familiarity with Milhaud's songs and the problems in performing or teaching them which had been encountered by those respondents who were familiar with the songs. One question was intended to determine participants' view of the importance of these songs, and another asked for suggestions for information or materials which would be helpful in incorporating Milhaud's songs into the studio curriculum.

A third part of the study was the analysis of selected songs. The songs chosen for analysis were chosen because of their potential suitability for use in the college voice studio. Analyses included translations of the texts, information on the origin and background of the songs, musical features of the songs, and pedagogical problems which the songs might present.

### Discussion and Conclusions

It is to be expected that family background, education, and associations will have a certain influence on a composer's approach to his work. While this may not always hold true, certainly for Milhaud it does. There were no surprises in the revelations of the composer's own writings or in those of his contemporaries in that regard. What was surprising, because it was absolutely contrary to the statements of most writers who addressed the subject of

influences on, and characteristics of, Milhaud's compositional style, was the composer's comments on the relative importance of his Jewish and French heritage. Milhaud stated clearly in many writings that, while his Jewish heritage was an integral part of his being, it was his French nationality (more specifically, his Provençal and Mediterranean roots) which most influenced his musical language. This is most unequivocally expressed in "The Problem of Jewish Music," the unpublished typescript of a lecture delivered at Columbia University sometime around 1945. This essay is housed in the Milhaud Archive at Mills College in Oakland, California, where Milhaud spent many years teaching after he was forced to flee Europe with his family in 1940.

The characteristic most commonly associated with Milhaud's style is his use of polytonality. Many writers correctly identify an overarching concern for melody in his compositional technique, but not all writers combine the two, or suggest that the polytonality is the result of simultaneous melodic movement rather than the arbitrary juxtaposition of two or more tonalities. Neither the hostile evaluations of contemporaneous critics nor the facile pronouncements of more recent writers to the effect that Milhaud took refuge in polytonality due to deficient compositional skills is supported by the evidence of his own

literary or musical writings. While it is true that he did not care for his harmony studies, counterpoint fascinated him; throughout his life, Milhaud credited his counterpoint teacher, André Gédalge, with being a major formative influence, as well as with teaching him everything he knew about pedagogy.

### The Songs

Part of the problem of incorporating Milhaud's songs into a college voice studio curriculum is that they are so little known. Milhaud himself wrote little about them, and often the music itself is difficult to obtain, so that the curious singer would not easily be able to browse through a number of songs in order to make independent judgments. As they do in regard to Milhaud himself, people who write about his songs tend either to like them or not; there is little middle ground. Much of the commentary on the songs is superficial, and there is a surprising degree of repetition in the commentary.

Support, on the other hand, comes from expected places, such as in the writings of Paul Collaer, and from unexpected ones, such as in Kurt Adler's text on accompanying and coaching. Adler places Milhaud's songs in company with those of Debussy, Fauré, Poulenc and others and calls these the culmination of French art song.

The sample survey of teachers, coaches, and accompanists revealed that one of the main reasons Milhaud's songs are not used in the college voice studio is that they are not readily available and are therefore not in the mainstream of twentieth-century vocal literature. Only eight sets or cycles were identified as having been performed by the teachers.<sup>49</sup> Seven works were identified by name as having been assigned to students.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, the songs as a body of literature are often perceived as difficult and inaccessible aesthetically by teachers who are only minimally familiar with some of them. Respondents who had either performed or taught some of the songs, however, often did not find them inaccessible or impracticable technically, assuming students who attempted the songs were well prepared for them.

Responses to the questionnaire identified, as hoped, some of the pedagogical problems associated with Milhaud's songs. Several categories of problems were identified by participants, and those categories corresponded almost

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<sup>49</sup>Those identified were Chansons de Ronsard, Poèmes juifs, Chants populaires hébraïques, Deux petits airs (Mallarmé), Cinq prières, L'amour chante, Chansons bas, and Catalogue de fleurs.

<sup>50</sup>Works identified by name were Quatre chansons de Ronsard, Catalogue de fleurs, Poèmes juifs, Cinq prières, Cinq chansons (Charles Vildrac), Trois poèmes (Jules Supervielle), and Psaume 129.

exactly to those which the researcher had anticipated. Not surprisingly, several respondents mentioned the high tessitura of the songs and the placement of vowels on high pitches as problematic. It should be noted, however, that all of the people who identified these problems had observed students preparing the Ronsard songs, which are intended for coloratura soprano (they were written for Lily Pons). These comments cannot, then, be taken as descriptive of all of Milhaud's songs, or even of all seven of the works which teachers had assigned to students.

As expected, many responses indicated that the language of the songs posed problems for students. These observations should be viewed in the context of the curriculum of the voice studio. French is usually the last standard language studied, and many of the problems cited (diction, understanding the meaning of the text, placement of vowels in high passages) are endemic to the teaching of French repertoire and do not reflect specifically or exclusively upon the songs of Milhaud. It is clear, however, that students will find that some knowledge of French language and of useful reference books in French is absolutely essential, if they are to appreciate these songs fully.

### Musical Analysis

Often, mistaken ideas are perpetuated about Milhaud's songs which examination of the music itself could dispel. Examination of the songs, even of a limited sampling of them, shows that they are not the frivolous concoctions that some writers suggest. Milhaud's is an eclectic style and, though he does use several identifiable techniques (such as the aforementioned polytonality, pedal point, and ostinato), he is bound by no formula.

As interesting as the features of individual songs might be, what is perhaps more interesting is the correlation of the theoretical writings of René Lenormand with the songs of Milhaud. Lenormand wrote about the state of musical composition in France at just the period when Milhaud's own style was developing, and echoes of his observations may be detected in Milhaud's work. Areas of correspondence include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Lenormand bases his explanation of the new developments on traditional (i.e., common practice) concepts and emphasizes the importance of technical mastery. Both of these are points made over and over again by Milhaud.

2. For Lenormand, certain "rules" were suspended in what he described as the "modern" music. (Here is one area where he and Milhaud disagreed on terminology. Milhaud

preferred "contemporary" to describe music of his era.) The long prohibited parallel fifths, for example, were all right as long as the composer had a definite aim. The prescribed resolution of seventh chords might be bypassed, favoring color over function; parallelism is embraced for its own sake and is no longer subject to the rules of harmonic progression and resolution of dissonance. (An example of the use of coloristic chords and of parallelism occurs in Chanson de l'aveugle, discussed in the fifth chapter.)

3. Added seconds or sixths are common in chords, Lenormand observes, and derive from certain melodic considerations. In Milhaud's writing, the added "wrong note" is often the result of parts that are temporally misaligned; one voice anticipates the next chord while others adhere to the prevailing harmony. Again, the modest Chanson de l'aveugle offers an example.

4. Lenormand suggests that "imitations," by which he means the exact or near-exact repetition of short melodic fragments, is disappearing, although examples may be found in Milhaud's songs in the forms of melodic fragments repeated in the bass and of ostinati (which he sometimes refers to as a pedal). See, for example, the discussion of "Fritillaires."



5. Pedals, according to Lenormand, are no longer limited to the bass line, and may occur in more than one voice at a time.

6. Lenormand devotes substantial attention to melodic intervals which may be easily sung. Procedures should be different for those melodic intervals which are doubled and those which are not. Contrary to the observation of at least one participant in the survey, examples of doubled melodies may be found among Milhaud's songs, even though the doubling may not be in the most obvious manner. An example of very obvious doubling occurs in "Les Jacinthes" from Catalogue de fleurs.

The analyses in this study are not intended to be exhaustive, nor can they be. (It is not in the nature of analysis to be truly exhaustive.) They represent a microcosm of the songs of Darius Milhaud and offer an approach which performers might find useful in the preparation of unfamiliar contemporary material.

### Conclusions

Responses of teachers, coaches, and accompanists to the questionnaire suggest that rejection of Milhaud's songs as teaching pieces often has more to do with unfamiliarity with the music and unavailability of scores than with an active decision to reject on aesthetic or technical grounds. One

teacher wrote reasons for not using Milhaud's songs as teaching material: "lack of advanced students; generally high cost of French music; lack of availability in general anthologies; lack of Milhaud's reputation as a mainstream voice composer." Another wrote, "Simply--I don't know them. Unfamiliarity breeds or continues a type of rejection."

Analysis of selected songs suggests that there are, among Milhaud's 265 songs, some which are appropriate for use in the college voice studio. Levels of difficulty vary, so that these might be used either as an engaging approach to the presentation of twentieth-century French artsong or as a supplement to an established curriculum. It seems reasonable to assume that examination of more of these songs will yield even more songs that might be incorporated into voice study at the college level.

Writings on the phenomenon of neglected literature suggest that, as a matter of principle, this literature should be identified and incorporated into the standard repertoire. Longyear (1970) and Emmons and Sonntag (1979) suggest that the college voice studio is the ideal place for the introduction of less common literature. The official position of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, as expressed in the association's journal is that twentieth-century literature should be explored.

The importance of standard repertoire is not diminished in these views, nor is the seriousness of a solid grounding in basic literature denied. It is merely recommended that teachers help students to expand their own musicianship in the exploration of less commonly done works. This is more easily said than done. Teachers have to make choices for their students, and most often the literature is drawn from what is considered standard repertoire. A composer who is not "in the mainstream," as suggested above, is not likely to be chosen for inclusion in a curriculum that is already stretched. "In the mainstream" might be interpreted as much in the sense of being readily available in anthologies as in the sense of being an "important composer."<sup>51</sup>

It is to be expected that the readily available published works and works which are recorded will take precedence over material that is difficult to acquire and for which no performance model is available. Listening to good recordings is a valuable part of the musician's education. In the study of Milhaud's songs, this part of the singer's training is not easily achieved.

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<sup>51</sup> Twentieth-century works are not the only ones which are infrequently performed. The songs of past masters such as Zelter and Loewe and even of composers of the stature of Mendelssohn and Liszt, Haydn and Mozart are hardly standard repertoire.

Recordings are valuable not only as performance models for songs which singers are studying, but as substitutes for live performance. A good live performance is almost always preferable aesthetically to a recorded performance, but it is not practicable to base one's knowledge of vocal literature entirely upon the works one has heard performed. Although musicians study the scores of a great deal of music without hearing it performed, it is only in performance that the work can take on its full meaning.

It is desirable that a young musician's ears become accustomed to unusual sounds. Milhaud often said he believed that if audiences and critics would give themselves a chance to live with "new" sounds they would adapt to them and find them not so strange after all. (Charles-Marie Widor, Milhaud's composition teacher at the Conservatoire had exactly that experience, according to Milhaud's account of his years there: "That charming teacher . . . would utter cries of alarm at every dissonance he came across in my works; as he listened he would exclaim: 'The worst of it is that you get used to them!'" (1949/1953, p. 51).

Good translations are essential for the performer. Since most student performers are not fluent in several languages, idiomatic translations are extremely important. One teacher wrote that he, like many others, "had the courage" to teach Poulenc's songs only after Pierre Bernac's

excellent book containing performance analyses and translations of the poetry was published. Teachers who responded to the survey expressed the opinion that literal translations and discussions of French poetry would be helpful in incorporating Milhaud's songs into the their curricula.

Finding background information on Milhaud's songs is not easy. Jane Hohfeld Galante's translation of Paul Collaer's biography of Milhaud (published in 1988), with its carefully categorized and updated list of works has filled a great need in this area. However, the interested singer will still find a challenge in locating information about the authors of the texts of some of the songs and information about the circumstances surrounding the composition of the works. The lack of this information does not mean that a work cannot be performed, but it does mean that the singer is less well equipped for a thoughtful performance.

### Recommendations

It is clear that there is a serious dearth of readily available scores and recordings of the songs, as well as a general lack of information about the songs as a body of literature. Several needs have been identified as a result

of this research, and with these in mind, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. that more of the songs of Darius Milhaud be identified as possible repertoire for the college voice studio;
2. that the songs so identified be analyzed according to the guidelines established in this research to produce commentary useful to teachers, vocal coaches, and accompanists in the presentation of the songs;
3. that hitherto unpublished songs be edited and published;
4. that an anthology of selected songs useful for the college voice studio be assembled, and that it include idiomatic English translations of the texts, analytical notes, and historical background of the songs;
5. that existing recordings of Milhaud's songs be re-issued, with particular emphasis being given to those performances in which Milhaud himself took part;
6. that hitherto unrecorded works among Milhaud's songs be recorded;
7. that an oral history of the songs and their performance be assembled which includes the

commentary of Madame Madelein Milhaud and of singers and other associates of the composer;

8. that this oral history be transcribed and housed in a central repository, the most logical being the Milhaud Archive at Mills College; and
9. that performers make the Darius Milhaud Society aware of programs which will contain solo songs of Milhaud, and that those performances be recorded and kept on file either by the society or in the Milhaud Archive or both.

APPENDIX  
QUESTIONNAIRE: SOLO SONGS OF MILHAUD

Note to studio voice teachers, coaches, and accompanists.  
This questionnaire is part of my dissertation work. My topic concerns the place of the songs of Darius Milhaud in the college curriculum. It would be helpful to me to learn how those songs are approached by professionals involved in studio voice teaching. Even if you do not perform the songs of Milhaud yourself or use them in your teaching, your answers are still valuable for this research project.

Please fill out the questionnaire and return it by September 16, 1988. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is attached for your convenience. Thank you very much for your help during this busy time in the academic year.

1. Please circle the word or words below that best describe your primary role in the studio.

voice teacher  
accompanist  
coach

2. Circle the type of institution with which you are affiliated:

Conservatory  
University (School of Music or College of Music)  
University (Department of Music)  
Private Studio  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the musical emphasis of your institution?

Performance  
Music education  
Music research  
Music as a liberal art  
Music as a service department  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_



4. Does your institution offer an undergraduate degree in vocal performance?

5. Does it offer graduate study in voice?

6. To what extent is your institution involved in the performance and teaching of twentieth-century music? (Please circle the appropriate number. Then feel free to add any comments you wish.)

- (1) Not at all involved.
- (2) Slightly involved.
- (3) Moderately involved.
- (4) Fairly extensively involved.
- (5) Very extensively involved.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

7. How many private voice students are you currently teaching?

Undergraduates \_\_\_\_\_; Graduates \_\_\_\_\_.

8. How many of your students are voice performance majors?

Undergraduates \_\_\_\_\_; Graduates \_\_\_\_\_.

9. To what extent are you, individually, involved in the teaching of twentieth-century vocal music? (Please circle the appropriate number. Then feel free to add any comments you wish.)

- (1) Not at all involved.
- (2) Slightly involved.
- (3) Moderately involved.
- (4) Fairly extensively involved.
- (5) Very extensively involved.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

10. Are you familiar with any of Milhaud's works for solo voice? If so, which?

11. Which, if any, have you performed?

12. Which, if any, have you assigned to your voice students?

13. In your opinion, at what level of advancement should the voice student be introduced to the songs of Milhaud?

14. If you have performed any of Milhaud's songs, what problems have you encountered as a singer or accompanist in the course of preparing the performance? "Problems" here should be understood to include both problems of technique and problems of musical interpretation. Do you find Milhaud's writing to be idiomatic for the voice and piano, or not?

15. What makes the songs appealing to you? (In other words, why did you choose to perform them; or, if you haven't performed them, why would you consider performing them? If you have rejected them for performance, why have you rejected them?)

16. If any of your students have performed any of Milhaud's songs, what problems have you encountered as a teacher, accompanist, or vocal coach? Again, "problems" should be understood to include both problems of technique and problems of musical interpretation.

17. Which twentieth-century composers have been represented on your own programs within the last five years?

18. Do you regularly assign twentieth-century song literature to your students? If so, which composers do you tend to assign?

19. In your opinion as a teacher, accompanist, or coach, how important are the solo vocal works of Milhaud in comparison to twentieth-century vocal literature as a whole? (Please circle the appropriate number. Then feel free to add any comments you wish.)

- (1) Not at all important.
- (2) Somewhat important.
- (3) Moderately important.
- (4) Fairly extensively important.
- (5) Extremely important.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

20. What materials would help you to use the songs of Milhaud in your teaching or performance or both? (For example: recordings, readings of French poetry, training in twentieth-century theory, annotated repertory lists.)

21. Please feel free to comment further, if you would like to share ideas not covered by the questions asked above. For example, any specific comparisons between Milhaud's work and that of other twentieth-century composers would be helpful.

If you wish, I will send you an abstract of my completed dissertation, along with publication and ordering information. Please write your name and mailing address on a separate sheet and return it with the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your help.

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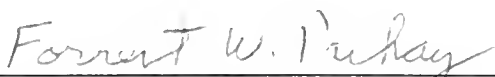
### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Anne L. Patterson holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Georgia College (Milledgeville, Georgia), a Certificate in the Kodály approach to music education from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music (Budapest), and a Master of Education (Music Education) degree from the University of Florida. She is presently on the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Central Arkansas, where she is Coordinator of Vocal Music Education.


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Anne Patterson was born February 19, 1946, and is the daughter of Lucille M. Patterson and the late Silas M. Patterson, of Milledgeville, Georgia. She is married to Anthony A. Walts.


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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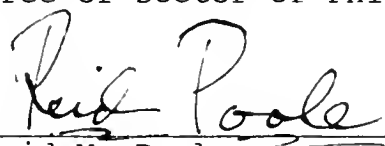
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